







The World's Classics

CCXXXVII

LETTERS OF EDMUND BURKE

A SELECTION



LETTERS  
OF  
EDMUND BURKE  
A Selection

Edited, with an Introduction

BY

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POLITICAL SCIENCE



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## INTRODUCTION

THIS volume is merely a selection from the published correspondence of Edmund Burke ; and it is mainly intended to illustrate the ample selection of his writings and speeches already printed in this series. For this purpose it has been necessary somewhat rigidly to exclude all correspondence of a personal or literary character. A few early letters have been printed to illustrate a Burke who could, at least in some degree, unbend ; and some verses have been allowed to appear, not because they do not endanger Burke's reputation, but because they amply demonstrate that even he was once young. But, for the most part, it is upon his favourite topics of Ireland, America, and the French Revolution that these letters dwell.

It is important to emphasize how comparatively small a selection of what might be printed this volume is. The official edition of Burke's correspondence occupies four large octavo volumes ;<sup>1</sup> and it is itself a collection based upon the somewhat curious principle that what letters had by any chance appeared elsewhere in print should find no place there. The result is that Burke's correspondence is, even in its printed form, scattered among a large number of volumes. In 1827 there was printed a collection of his letters to his friend Dr. French Laurence, the lawyer ;<sup>2</sup> a further large number will

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke . . .* Edited by Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir Richard Bourke, K.C.B. 4 vols. London, 1844.

<sup>2</sup> *The Epistolary Correspondence of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke and Dr. French Laurence.* London, 1827.

be found in the quasi-official life by Sir James Prior. A pamphlet on Canning's attitude to the Catholic claims<sup>1</sup> prints some of Burke's correspondence with his son upon this subject. Other letters may be found in the lives of Lord Charlemont<sup>2</sup> and of the first Earl of Minto.<sup>3</sup> This, it may be added, is only a portion of the printed sources; and it does not include the manuscript material. Letters of Burke must appear in the archives of some of the leading Whig families of the time—the Saviles, the Fitzwilliams, and the Portlands. We have few of his letters to Fox, practically none to Sheridan; and letters from him, not printed, have been offered for sale in booksellers' catalogues in recent years. An ample edition of his correspondence would be a great historical service.

For it would illustrate upon a massive scale what can be only partially revealed by this selection. It would prove, if proof be needed, the consistency of his principles no less than the amazing accuracy of his insight. It would reveal how instant was his generosity and how abiding was his affection. Faults, indeed, Burke had; and his correspondence is hardly less suggestive there than in relation to his virtues. No one can read through his private letters without a sense that he was overawed by rank not seldom to the detriment of his judgement. Particularly when he writes to *émigrés* of high birth, he seems to be composing on his knees. Obviously, too, he was a man of emotions so profound that, where they

<sup>1</sup> R. Therry, *Letter to Rt. Hon. G. Canning*, 1826.

<sup>2</sup> Hardy (F.), *Memoirs of the Ld. of the Earl of Charlemont*, 1810.

<sup>3</sup> Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of first Lord Minto*, 1731-1806, 1874.

were deeply touched, the rationalism that appears so striking in his analysis of the American Revolution deserts him completely. A good case, indeed, might be made out for the thesis that what there is of liberalism in Burke derives rather from the impulse of compassion than from any logical sense of right. The conservative is obvious all through the correspondence; perhaps nowhere more completely than in his almost entire inability to detect the implications of economic disharmony. Neither in the letters nor in the treatises is there any such insight into the consequences of the property-relation as distinguished Harrington at the end of one revolution or Madison at the close of another. Burke, as this correspondence amply illustrates, accepted without question the implications of the system within which he worked; and it was for its repair rather than for its reconstruction that he was chiefly concerned.

Books on Burke are relatively few in number when the great part he played is borne in mind. Macaulay once thought of writing upon him, but could not do justice to his subject 'if I am to be under the necessity of counting lines and pages'.<sup>1</sup> The classical discussion is in the two volumes of Lord Morley, of which the first, a purely critical study, is by all odds the best treatment he has received.<sup>2</sup> There are some sound remarks upon him in the second volume of Sir Leslie Stephen's great *History of English Thought in the*

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> *Burke. a Critical Study* (1867)—now out of print and scarce; *Burke* (English Men of Letters Series, 1888). It is greatly to be hoped that the first essay will soon be available to students.

*Eighteenth Century*; and Professor John MacCunn has written a very useful summary of his teaching.<sup>1</sup> Nor should the brilliant essays of the late Mr. E. J. Payne<sup>2</sup> be neglected. Intended only as introductions to a select edition of his works, they display learning and critical acumen in a high degree. The fullest biographical treatment is still that of Sir James Prior;<sup>3</sup> but it is marred by an excessive partiality for its subject and by a grotesque ill-arrangement.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Political Philosophy of Burke* (London, 1908).

<sup>2</sup> *Burke's Select Works*, edited by E. J. Payne. 3 vols. (Oxford, 1904). For a very different treatment cf. my *Political Thought from Locke to Bentham* (London, 1920), Chapter VI. See also the interesting sketch in H. N. Brailsford, *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle* (London, 1914), Chapter I.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoir of the Life and Character of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke*. Third and enlarged edition (London, 1839).

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON <sup>1</sup>

*Dublin, January 9, 1744.*

DEAR DICK,

You find me as good as my promise in sending some more of my rhymes to trouble you ; and what I said to you in former favour, that I am like the rest of my brother pettifoggers, you find now to be true. What I send you here is a day of my life, after the manner I usually spend it. I have put it in verse for two reasons ; the chief and principal of which is to engage you to answer it in like manner ; and the other is that the subject being in itself dry and barren, and, of course, no pleasant reading, I have laid out what ornaments I could spare on it, in the small time I have to do any thing for your amusement. Thus far by way of proem or preface ; proceed we now to the matter in hand—and to begin :

Soon as Aurora from the blushing skies  
Bids the great ruler of the day to rise,  
No longer balmy sleep my limbs detains ;  
I hate its bondage and detest its chains.  
Fly ! Morpheus, fly ! and leave the foul embrace ;  
Let nobler thoughts supply thy loathsome place ;  
Let every dream—each fancied joy—give way  
To the more solid comforts of the day.  
See, through the lucid substance of yon glass,  
Sol's radiant beams enlighten as they pass ;  
Dispel each gloomy thought, each care control,  
And calm the rising tumults of the soul.  
See, how its rays do every thought refine,  
And fire the soul to raptures half divine.  
Led and inspired by such a guide, I stray

<sup>1</sup> The son of Burke's old schoolmaster, Abraham Shackleton.

Through fragrant gardens and the pride of May.  
Sweet month ! but oh ! what daring muse can give  
Words worthy thee, and words so like to live !  
While each harmonious warbler of the sky  
Sends up its grateful notes to thank the high,  
The mighty Ruler of the world below,—  
Parent of all, from whom our blessings flow.

Teach me, O lark ! with thee to greatly rise,  
T' exalt my soul and lift it to the skies ;  
To make each worldly joy as mean appear,  
Unworthy care, when heavenly joys are near.

But oh ! my friend, the muse has swelled her song,  
From business has detained you quite too long.  
Avails my morn's description aught to you,  
Who morn and even in perfection view ?  
And now the sun, with a more piercing ray,  
Advises me I must no longer stay.  
All dull, with mournful heavy steps I go ;  
The unwilling town receives me entering slow.  
Returning home, I nature's wants appease ;  
Then, to the college fate your friend conveys.  
But here the muse nor can, nor will, declare,  
What is my work, and what my studies there—  
( 'Tis not her theme : she still delights to sing  
The gently rising mount and bubbling spring <sup>1</sup>—)  
But oft amid the shady parks I rove,  
Plunged in the deep recesses of the grove.  
While, oh ! embroiled beneath the trees I lie,  
Fann'd by the gales you voluntary fly,  
Oh ! would some kinder genius me convey  
To those fair banks where Greece's <sup>2</sup> waters stray,  
Where the tall firs o'ershade his crystal floods,  
Or hide me in the thickest gloom of woods ;  
To bear me hence, far from the city's noise,  
And give me all I ask, the country's joys.  
Now Sol's bright beams grown fainter as he goes,  
Invite the whole creation to repose ;  
Each bird gives o'er its note, the thrush alone

<sup>1</sup> Helicon and Parnassus.

<sup>2</sup> A river that runs near Ballitore.

Fills the cool grove when all the rest are gone.  
 Harmonious bird ! daring till night to stay,  
 And glean the last remainder of the day.  
 The slowly moving hours bring on at last  
 The pleasing time, (how tedious was the past !)  
 Which shews me Herbert ; he, since thou art gone,  
 My sole companion, 'midst the throngs of town.  
 By the foul river's side we take our way,  
 Where Liffey rolls her dead dogs to the sea ;  
 Arrived, at length, at our appointed stand,  
 By waves enclosed, the margin of the land,  
 Where once the sea with a triumphing roar,  
 Roll'd his huge billows to a distant shore.  
 There swam the dolphins, hid in waves unseen,  
 Where frisking lambs now crop the verdant green.  
 Secured by mounds of everlasting stone,  
 It stands for ever safe, unoverthrown.

: : : : : : : : : : 1

Neptune, indignant thus to be confined,  
 Swells in the waves and bellows in the wind ;  
 Raising in heaps his ponderous wat'ry store,  
 Hangs like a mountain o'er the trembling shore.  
 Now ! now he bursts, and with a hideous sound,  
 That shakes the strong foundation of the ground ;  
 Dreadful, with complicated terrors falls,  
 Discharging vengeance on the hated walls <sup>2</sup>.  
 The walls, secured by well compacted stone,  
 Repel the monarch with a hollow groan.  
 'Tis here we sit, while in joint prospect rise,  
 The ocean, ships, and city, to our eyes.  
 Enchanting sight ! when beauteous Sol half way  
 Merges his radiant body in the sea ;  
 And just withdrawing from our mortal sight,  
 Lengthens the quivering shadow of his light.  
 But now inspired—by what exalted muse,—  
 What lofty song, what numbers shall I choose ?

<sup>1</sup> Two lines, nearly obliterated in the original, are here omitted.

<sup>2</sup> The north wall.

Or how adapt my verses to the theme,  
 Great as the subject, equal and the same ?  
 Or how describe the horrors of the deep,  
 Lulled into peace, and loftiest waves asleep ?  
 Not e'en a breath moves o'er the boundless flood,  
 So calm, so peaceful, and so still it stood !  
 The sun withdrawn, and the clear night o'erspread  
 In all its starry glories above our head ;  
 While moon, pale empress, shines with borrowed light,  
 Fills the alternate throne and rules the night ;  
 And other worlds, descrying earth afar,  
 Cry, ' See, how little looks yon twinkling star ! '  
 It is not mine the glorious view to sing,  
 These mighty wonders of the Almighty King ;  
 But let my soul, in still amazement lost,  
 From thought to thought, and maze to maze, be tost.  
 The advent'rous task a muse like yours requires,  
 That warms your pen, and fills your breast with fires.  
 Thus far the muse has, in a feeble lay,  
 Show'd how I spend the various hours of day :  
 The story placed in order by the sun,  
 Shows where my labours ended,—where begun.

E. B.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Arran Quay, November 1, 1744.*

My dear Zelim's kind epistle had not been so long unanswered by his Mirza, but for the hurry of business which has constantly attended me since I received it, so that the post slipped over unknown to me. But we don't stand on forms and ceremonies, like other correspondents. We know that it is not forgetfulness nor neglect of one another that can make a gap in our intercourse. The joy of receiving a letter wipes away the impatience of waiting for it. It is so with me, and I dare say with you too. I am in a rhyming humour ; and I believe I can express my sentiments to you better in verse than prose, on that head ; and so take the best I can make in the time.

As when some cloud in the ethereal way  
Darkens the sun, and robs us of the day ;  
Its hated shadow grief projects around,  
And spreads a gloomy horror on the ground ;  
With universal cry all nature mourns,  
No joys can taste until her light returns.  
But when to humble prayers indulgent heaven  
A blast to clear the troubled skies has given ;  
Each bar removed, with a redoubled blaze  
The golden sun pours forth his glorious rays ;  
With dazzling beams the wide horizon shines,  
Brighter than India covers in her mines ;  
Mankind confesses joy with new delight,  
Drown'd in the glorious ocean of the light.  
So souls made one by friendship's sacred band,  
Possession must by absence understand :  
The joys are doubled which we miss awhile ;  
Lost treasures found with greater lustre smile.

I must, my dear Zelim, beg pardon for having taken up so much time with trifles, and promise that in the rest of my letter I shall treat of something of more importance ; and first to answer yours. I am of your opinion, that those poor souls who never had the happiness of hearing that saving name, shall in no wise be damned. But, as you know, my dear Zelim, there are several degrees of felicity—a lower one, which the mercy of God will suffer them to enjoy ; but not any thing to be compared to that of those who have lived and died in Christ. This is sincerely my belief of those ; but I assure you that I don't think near so favourably of those sectaries you mentioned ; many of them breaking, as they themselves confess, for matters of indifference, and no way concerned in the only affair that is necessary, viz. our salvation ; and what a great crime schism is, you can't be ignorant. This, and the reasons in my last, and if you consider what will occur to yourself, together with several texts, will bring you to my way of thinking in that point. Let us endeavour to live according to the rules of the Gospel. and He that

prescribed them, I hope, will consider our endeavours to please Him, and assist us in our designs. This, my friend, is your advice, and how hard is it for me to follow it ! I am in the enemy's country—the townsman is beset on every side. It is here difficult to sit down to think seriously. Oh ! how happy are you who live in the country ! I assure you, my friend, that without the superior grace of God, I will find it very difficult to be commonly virtuous. I don't like that part of your Letter wherein you say, 'you had the testimony of well-doing in your breast.' Whenever such notions rise again, endeavour to suppress them. It is one of the subtlest stratagems the enemy of mankind uses to delude us, that, by lulling us into a false peace, his conquest may be the easier. We should always be in no other than the state of a penitent, because the most righteous of us is no better than a sinner. Pray read the parable of the pharisee and the publican who prayed in the temple. You see that I tell you what I think amiss in yours—why don't you use the same freedom with mine ? Do, I beg you, because we shall be both of us improved by it. I have a great deal to say ; but as this is a holiday, and I am going to the college, to evening prayers, I must write no more, but defer it till another time. I was going to say something of natural philosophy, something of which I now read ; and as you have lately been studying astronomy, I beg of you to communicate to me some of your observations, by which we may mutually improve.

E. BURKE.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Dublin, January 25, 1745.*

I RECEIVED your favour, the product of ill-humour ; yet will I endeavour to answer it the best I can, though every thing around conspires to excite in me a contrary disposition : the melancholy gloom of the day, the whistling winds, and the hoarse rumbling of the swollen Liffey, with the flood which, even where I write, lays close siege to our whole street. not permitting any to

go in or out to supply us with the necessaries of life ; yet the joy of conversing with my friend can dispel the cloudiness of the day, lull the winds, and stop the rapid passage of the flood. How happy was the time when we could mutually interchange our thoughts, and pour the friendly sentiments of our hearts, without obstruction, from our lips, unindebted to the pen, and unimpeded by the post !

No one, perhaps, has seen such a flood here as we have now. The quay wall, which before our door is I believe about <sup>1</sup> feet high, is scarce discernible, seemingly only as a mark <sup>2</sup> to show us where the bank once bounded the Liffey. Our cellars are drowned, not as before, for that was but a trifle to this ; for now the water comes up to the first floor of the house, threatening us every minute with rising a great deal higher, the consequence of which would infallibly be the fall of the house ; and, to add to our misfortune, the inhabitants of the other quay, secured by their situation, deride the poor prisoners ; while, from our doors and windows, we watch the rise and fall of the waters as carefully as the Egyptians do the Nile, but for different reasons. It gives me pleasure to see nature in those great, though terrible scenes. It fills the mind with grand ideas, and turns the soul in upon herself. This, together with the sedentary life I lead, forced some reflections on me which, perhaps, otherwise would not have occurred. I considered how little man is, yet, in his own mind, how great ! He is lord and master of all things, yet scarce can command anything. He is given a freedom of his will ; but wherefore ? Was it but to torment and perplex him the more ? How little avails this freedom, if the objects he is to act upon be not as much disposed to obey as he to command ! What well-laid, and what better-executed scheme of his is there, but what a small change of nature is sufficient to defeat and entirely abolish ? If but one element

<sup>1</sup> The number is torn out by the seal.

<sup>2</sup> The words ' a mark ', in this sentence, are an insertion ; the paper having been torn here also by the seal.

happens to encroach a little on the other, what confusion may it not create in his affairs ! what havoc ! what destruction ! The servant destined to his use confines, menaces, and frequently destroys this mighty, this feeble lord. I have a mind to go abroad to-day—my business and my pleasures require it ; but the river has overflown its banks, and I can't stir without apparent danger of my life. What, then, shall I do ? Shall I rage, fret, and accuse Providence of injustice ? No ; let me rather lament that I do not what is always right ; what depends not on the fortuitous changes of this world, nor the blind sport of fortune, but remains unalterably fixed in the mind ; untouched, though this shattered globe should fall in pieces, and bury us in the ruins. Though I do lead a virtuous life, let it show me how low I am, and of myself how weak ; how far from an independent being ; given as a sheep into the hands of the great Shepherd of all, on whom let us cast all our cares, for He careth for us.

My friend will excuse this long, and, perhaps, impertinent discourse, because I always like that the letter should contain the thoughts that, at that time, employ me. If you don't like this method, advertise me of it, and I shall mend.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*February 3, 1746.*

DEAR DICK,

I received both your favours ; and answered, in a former letter, your question concerning examinations. Be assured that whatever sensations you had at parting were fully answered by mine. However, I can't call what I then felt, and do in part feel now, directly grief ; it was rather a kind of melting tenderness tinged with sorrow, which took me wholly up, while I was alone, in thinking on the company I had so lately left ; a contemplation too delightful to let me taste anything like grief. And why should we grieve ? We had made the best use of the time we were together, and omitted

nothing in our power to make it entertaining and improving. And now we must break off, because the necessity of our affairs requires it ; and we still live in hope to see and converse with one another again, on the same footing. Our parting, if I may make such a comparison, is like the sensation a good man feels at the hour of his death. He is conscious that he has used his time to the best advantage, and now must, through the condition of human nature, depart. He feels, indeed, a little sorrow at quitting his friends, but it is very much allayed by considering he shall see them all again. You need not fear our friend Faulkner; at least, yet awhile. Your mentioning him makes me think what motives men have in general for esteeming indifferent things—not from their real value, but from the names that overawe their judgement. Had any one now overlooked our letters, they should find five hundred faults, and think, may be, one part entirely ridiculous. But let us once get a reputation by our writings, or otherwise, they shall immediately become most valuable pieces, and all the faults be construed into beauties. Pope says, all the advantage arising from the reputation of wit, is the privilege of saying foolish things unnoticed ; and it really is so, as to letters, or anything committed to writing. But I don't think it holds good with respect to conversation ; for I have observed, that where a man gets a reputation for being a little witty, all shun, fear, and hate him, and carp at and canvass his most trifling words or actions. You must forgive me, if this letter be heavy and dull. You know the writer is known by his writing. Many things conspire to make me so ; for I have been within all day, read, wrote, and ate my dinner, which last generally most effectually damps my spirits for a while. Now I mention my writing, I have done some part of my poem, even so far as the invocation, which is this : how like you it ?

Ye beauteous nymphs who haunt the dusky wood,  
Which hangs recumbent o'er the crystal flood,  
Or risen from water, as the water fair,  
'Mong the cleft rocks divide your amber hair ;

Oft, as delighted with my rural lay,  
 Earnest you listen'd all the summer's day,  
 Nor thought it long ;—with favour hear my vow,  
 And with your kind assistance help me now.  
 And you, whose midnight dance in mystic round,  
 With a green circle marks the flow'ry ground,  
 Oh ! aid my voice, that I may wake once more  
 The slumbering echo on the Mulla's shore.  
 Thou chief of floods, Blackwater, hoary sire !  
 With all thy beauties all my breast inspire,  
 To trace the winding channel of thy course,  
 And find the hidden wonders of thy source.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*April 26, for fear I should forget 1745.<sup>1</sup>*

DEAR DICK,

I received your English manuscript, in answer to my Arabian, which I hope you have since been able to decipher. I protest, when I wrote it, I thought that though it was not as good, yet it was as legible a hand as any in the world. You see how blind we are to our own imperfections. I shall, however, try to mend it, and give you no just cause of complaint for the future.

This Pretender, who gave us so much disturbance for some time past, is at length, with his adherents, entirely defeated, and himself (as some say) taken prisoner. This is the most material, or rather, the only news here. 'Tis strange to see how the minds of the people are in a few days changed. The very men who, but a while ago, while they were alarmed by his progress so heartily cursed and hated those unfortunate creatures, are now all pity, and wish it could be terminated without bloodshed. I am sure I share in the general compassion. 'Tis, indeed, melancholy to consider the state of those unhappy gentlemen who engaged in this

<sup>1</sup> It is so dated in the original MS. letter ; yet it is certain the date of the year should be 1746. The Pretender did not land in Scotland until July, 1745, and the battle of Culloden was fought on the 16th April, 1746.

affair (as for the rest they lose but their lives), who have thrown away their lives and fortunes, and destroyed their families for ever, in what, I believe, they thought a just cause. My friend, you put a wrong construction on what I called indolence in my letter. It was no more than a simple sloth which, indeed, hindered me from doing much good, but threw me into no ill action that I know of, extraordinary. Neither do I think I keep bad company. I am, however, much obliged to you for your good advice, and if you could, without trouble, I should be glad you'd continue it. Advice never comes so acceptably, nor is it like to do so much good, as from one who has our interest at heart, and which proceeds from a desire of improving, not reproaching us—I hope I am such.

Yours,  
E. BURKE.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Dublin, July 12, 1746.*

DEAR DICK,

You may excuse, indeed, my long silence, if you know the cause of it, since nothing but the most dangerous illness my mother ever had, could prevent my writing to remove the distrust you seem to have expressed, in a late letter, of my friendship. In all my life, I never found so heavy a grief, nor really did I well know what it was before. You may well believe this, when I tell you, that, for three days together, we expected her death every moment; and really I was so low and weak myself for some time after, that I could not sit down to write; but now, as the cause is removed, and my mother (thank God!) on the mending hand, I shall be no longer silent. I can't, however, pretend to say you shall hear often from me, till you see me, which will be about the end of next week, when your name-sake,<sup>1</sup> whom you will once more take into

<sup>1</sup> Richard Burke, younger brother of Edmund.

your protection, may answer your questions *viva voce*. Now I am upon that subject, I am surprised at what Mr. Bayley reported about my father's quarrelling with yours. I always heard him, at all times, when he had occasion to mention him, do it with all the regard and gratitude that so great care and merit deserved; and furthermore, I can say, that he intended to send him back at the expiration of his quarter, as my mother told your aunt; and the only cause of his removal for that time was to divert my mother, as she was beginning to relapse into her old disorder, and not for any misunderstanding. I am glad Sisson's company was agreeable to you. I wish you may every day meet friends as pleasing; for really, after all, whatever motives it may be founded on, '*Nil ego praetulerim jucundo sanus amico*,' as has been said a thousand times before. I have got a good many new acquaintances, and some odd too, whose characters may divert us when we meet. '*Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas, gaudia, discursus, nostrae sunt deliciae*.'<sup>1</sup> I spend three hours almost every day in the public library, where there is a fine collection of books—the best way in the world of killing thought. As for other studies, I am deep in metaphysics and poetry. I have read some history. I am endeavouring to get a little into the accounts of this, our own poor country. I'll hear from you next post, how you spend your time, and what's your present study. I have done now, and am with compliments,

Yours, &c.

E. BURKE.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Ormond Quay, March 21, 1746-7.*

YOUR last favour which I received, gave me the greatest pleasure; in which you mention your sending me another, which I received not. In this you say,

<sup>1</sup> This passage of Juvenal, which Burke has altered by

you answered my queries : I beg you will answer them in your next. I think you take no bad method to fix the substance of your letter in my memory ; by making some parts of it so dark, as to oblige me to read it over three or four times ; and in this too, you do me a piece of service, for possibly, were it quite clear, I might pass over it without due consideration ; and by that means lose abundance of pleasure and advantage that I might gain from a more attentive perusal. Such as, to mention one I don't yet very well understand ; ' it was imported hither from the country of Job, alias, the land of Uz.' To mention more would be to show my own stupidity : though I have now come to the understanding of all the rest. You ask me if I read ? I deferred answering this question, till I could say I did ; which I can almost do, for this day I have shook off idleness and begun to buckle to. I wish I could have said this to you, with truth, a month ago. It would have been of great advantage to me. My time was otherwise employed. Poetry, Sir, nothing but poetry, could go down with me ; though I have read more than wrote. So you see I am far gone in the poetical madness, which I can hardly master, as indeed, all my studies have rather proceeded from sallies of passion, than from the preference of sound reason ; and like the nature of all other natural appetites, have been very violent for a season, and very soon cooled, and quite absorbed in the succeeding. I have often thought it a humorous consideration to observe, and sum up, all the madness of this kind I have fallen into, this two years past. First I was greatly taken with natural philosophy ; which, while I should have given my mind to logic, employed me incessantly. This I call my *furor mathematicus*. But this worked off, as soon as I began to read it in the college ; as men, by repletion, cast off their stomachs all they have eaten. Then I turned back to logic and

substituting *nostrae sunt deliciae*, for *nostri est farrago libelli*, is in the 1st Satire, v. 86.

metaphysics. Here I remained a good while, and with much pleasure, and this was my *furor logicus*; a disease very common in the days of ignorance, and very uncommon in these enlightened times. Next succeeded the *furor historicus*, which also had its day, but is now no more; being entirely absorbed in the *furor poeticus*, which (as skilful physicians assure me), is as difficultly cured as a disease very nearly akin to it; namely, the itch. Nay, the Hippocrates of poets says so expressly: 'tenet insanabile multos scribendi cacoethes.' [Lib. 1. aphor. pa. 12.] But doctors differ, and I don't despair of a cure. Now, to what *you* shall read; which shall be, non *juveni naris obesae*, but *curvatae*. I must confess I would recommend Sallust, rather than Tully's epistles; which I think are not so extremely valuable. Besides, Sallust is indisputably one of the best historians among the Romans; both for the purity of his language, and elegance of his style. He has, I think, a fine, easy, and diversified narrative, mixed with reflections, moral and political, neither very trite and obvious, nor out of the way and abstract; which is, I think, the true beauty of historical observation. Neither should I pass by his beautiful painting of characters. In short, he is an author that, on all accounts, I would recommend to you. As for Terence and Plautus, what I fancy you will chiefly get by them, as to the language, is some insight into the common manner of speech used by the Romans. One excels in the justness of his pieces, the other in the humour. I think a play in each will be sufficient. I would recommend to you Tully's orations,—excellent indeed. You will pardon, if I have been too dogmatical; but remember that what I say is always with this restriction; that it is submitted to your better judgement. Dunkin's Boeotia is, I think, to be reckoned among the bad pieces; and is, in my opinion, the worst thing I ever saw of his.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Monmouth, August 31, 1751.*<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SHACKLETON,

If having very little to say was sufficient excuse for my silence, I fear I should continue it much longer. The truth is, I have been so long an invalid and a traveller (a sort of people to whom great allowances must be made), that I was always either too weak, or too much hurried, to set about anything. But though I omitted to write, I have not forgot how much, on every account, I am indebted to your friendship. I don't think it necessary, when a man writes to his friend, that he should make his letter a gazette for news; or puzzle himself for something deep and philosophical; or is obliged, under penalties and pains, to be witty. It is enough, in my opinion, to give our friend some proof that we still keep him in our memory, and receive the same from him; and I assure you I think, in this plain intercourse of honest sentiments, there is more satisfaction and more merit too, than in any affected compliments, let them be ever so fine, which none can admire, but those who don't know how they are produced, and on what occasions.

I hope your little family is well; I believe you are so good a husband and father, as to talk of it with pleasure, and that you think me so much your friend as to hear it with satisfaction; though I am no father, nor ever was, except of some metaphorical children, which were extremely short-lived, and whilst they lived (as you know) too scandalous to be owned. I hope my present studies may be attended with more success; at least, I have this comfort; that though a middling poet cannot be endured, there is some quarter

<sup>1</sup> Burke entered his name at the Middle Temple in April, 1747, and appears to have gone to London to keep law terms in 1750. During the time required for this purpose, he passed the vacations and any intervals of leisure, in travelling about England, generally in company with his friend and distant relative, Mr. William Burke.

for a middling lawyer. I read as much as I can (which is, however, but a little), and am but just beginning to know something of what I am about ; which, till very lately, I did not. This study causes no difficulty to those who already understand it, and to those who never will understand it ; and for all between those extremes, God knows they have a hard task of it. So much is certain, though the success is precarious ; but that we must leave to Providence. I am now at Monmouth, where I live very satisfactorily, am well, and know, by experience of the contrary, what a blessing that is. I wish you may not labour too much for your constitution ; which now, at least, you are obliged to take care of. My most sincere respects to your father, mother, spouse, aunt, and sister ; and believe me your very affectionate friend and servant,

EDM. BURKE.

Direct to me at Mr. Hipkis's, Ironmonger, in Monmouth ;—my service to Hobbs : Dennis has acquainted me of his good intentions towards me.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Turlaine, September 28, 1752.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have several letters to write this day, and must begin every one of them with an apology for not having written before. I think I have greater occasion to apologize to you than to any one, because I love you better, and have used you much worse ; but I know that though my fault should require a great deal to be said, your good nature will dispense with it. You will believe I could not forget you ; and if you do, my business is done, for that is all, in short, I can say in my defence. I have now before me your letter, which I received about this time last year, in Monmouth. I now sit down to answer it at Turlaine, in Wilts. You have compared me, for my rambling

disposition, to the sun. As the simile was about the sun, it was probably a compliment; if so, I thank you for it. If it was rather a reproof, why, I thank you too; it may possibly do me more good. But, sincerely, I can't help finding a likeness myself, for they say the sun sends down much the same influences whenever he comes into the same signs. Now I am influenced to shake off my laziness and write, to you at the same time of the year, and from the same west country, I wrote my last in. 'Tis true, I am not directly at the same place; but you know, to those who are at a vast distance, things may be a great way asunder, and yet seem near. But not to run this allusion quite out of breath, since I had your letter, I have often shifted the scene. I spent part of the winter, that is the term-time, in London, and part in Croydon, in Surrey. About the beginning of summer, finding myself attacked with my old complaints, I went once more to Bristol, and found the same benefit. I thank God for it, and wish I had grace to take, in its full extent, your very friendly and rational advice. I don't know whether I said much to you of our adventures at Monmouth; they would almost compose a novel, and that of a more curious and entertaining kind, than some of those we are entertained with from the press. I assure you, we found discourse for that town and the adjacent country whilst we stayed there, and even when we left it. Whilst we stayed, they amused themselves with guessing the reason that would induce us to come amongst them; and when we left them, they were no less employed to discover why we went away without effecting those purposes they planned for us. The most innocent scheme they guessed was that of fortune-hunting; and when they saw us quit the town without wives, then the lower sort sagaciously judged us spies to the French king. You will wonder that persons of no great figure should cause so much talk; but in a town very little frequented by strangers, with very little business to employ their bodies, and

less speculation to take up their minds, the least thing sets them in motion, and supplies matter for their chat. What is much more odd is, that here, my companion<sup>1</sup> and I puzzle them as much as we did at Monmouth; for this is a place of very great trade in making of fine cloths, in which they employ a vast number of hands. The first conjecture which they made was that we were authors, for they could not fancy how any other sort of people could spend so much of their time at books; but finding that we received from time to time a good many letters, they conclude us merchants; and so, from inference to inference, they at last began to apprehend that we were spies, from Spain, on their trade. Our little curiosity, perhaps, cleared us of that imputation; but still the whole appears very mysterious, and our good old woman cries, 'I believe that you be gentlemen, but I ask no questions;' and then praises herself for her great caution and secrecy. What makes the thing still better, about the same time we came hither arrived a little parson, equally a stranger; but he spent a good part of his hours in shooting and other country amusements—got drunk at night, got drunk in the morning, and became intimate with everybody in the village. He surprised nobody: no questions were asked about him, because he lived like the rest of the world: but that two men should come into a strange country, and partake of none of the country diversions, seek no acquaintance, and live entirely recluse, is something so inexplicable as to puzzle the wisest heads, even that of the parish clerk himself. We are, however, as satisfactorily fixed as we can wish. We live in a pretty large house, which we have almost to ourselves. Our landlady has been once a rich woman, but happening to go down in the world on the accession of the Hanover family to the throne, she attributes all her misfortunes to that event. It is the pleasantest thing in the world to hear the good folks' opinion of state affairs. In short, they are

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William Burke.

hearty Jacobites ; that is, a sort of people, whose politics consist in wishing that right may take place ; and their religion, in heartily hating Presbyterians. Our family consist of the old gentlewoman, an old woman, her sister, and a young fellow, her son, who is a great *scholar*, and knows what is what, and therefore much esteemed by some of the neighbouring squires. I have troubled you, perhaps, with too many trifling particulars, but they may possibly give you a better idea of our people than a more laboured description. As for this country, though the soil is generally poor in our part of it, it is extremely pleasant, sweetly diversified with hills and woods intermixed with villages. We have one point of view from which we can reckon six steeples. The country is very populous, and it is the only one I ever saw where children are really an advantage to their parents, for I have seen little girls of six or seven years old at the wheel, and I am told that they can earn three shillings and sixpence a week each, which is more than their keeping can amount to, though I hear them say that trade is decaying amongst them, and that formerly they had greater prices. I had a letter from Dennis some time since. He mentions nothing of his affairs, but seemed angry with me for my long silence. I wrote him an answer to excuse myself. I wish him very well, and would gladly know how the world goes with him. As for you, I suppose you have long since been a second time a father. I wish most sincerely all manner of happiness, both to the children and the father and mother. Pray remember me in the best manner to her that I have last mentioned. Assure your father and mother that I have the most grateful and affectionate remembrance of them, and give my hearty services to all friends. Believe me, with great sincerity, Dear Dick,

Your friend and servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

MR. EDMUND BURKE, TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Battersea, August 10, 1757.*

DEAR SHACKLETON,

If you will not pardon my long silence without an apology, I am satisfied that no apology I can make will induce you to pardon it. I have broken all rules; I have neglected all decorums; everything, except that I have never forgot a friend whose good head and heart have made me esteem and love him; and whose services to me have caused obligations that are never to be broken. What appearance there may have been of neglect, arose from my manner of life: chequered with various designs; sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country; sometimes in France, and shortly, please God, to be in America.<sup>1</sup> During that time, however, of my silence, my inquiries about you have been warm and frequent, and I had the pleasure (you will, I hope, believe it a sincere one) of hearing that you are not deficient in success in the world, nor in domestic satisfaction. I do not know of any disappointment that vexed me so much, as having missed seeing you when you were in London. Your letter came to Mr. Burke's, in Sergeant's Inn, while I was in the country, and they did not forward it to me, expecting me in town every day. But when I arrived and found your letter, I found, at the same time, that you were returned to Ireland. Opportunities of that kind happen so seldom, and are of such value, that it is very mortifying to miss them. This letter is accompanied by a little performance of

<sup>1</sup> Burke was not called to the bar; nor does it appear on what account he declined the profession for which he was intended, and for the practice of which he had, to a certain degree, prepared himself. He thought of removing to America, two or three years previous to the date of this letter to Shackleton; but gave up the project at that period, on its being objected to by his father. It is said he was offered some considerable employment in the state of New York.

mine, which I will not consider as ineffectual, if it contributes to your amusement. It lay by me for a good while, and I at last ventured it out. It has not been ill received, so far as a matter on so abstracted a subject meets with readers. Will you accept it as a sort of offering in atonement for my former delinquencies?<sup>1</sup> If I would not have you think that I have forgot you, so neither would I have your father, to whom I am under obligations that I neither can nor wish to shake off. I am really concerned for the welfare of you all, and for the credit of the school where I received the education that, if I am anything, has made me so. I hear with great satisfaction the account of Kearney's being chosen a fellow in our college. My brother Dick is now with me, and joins me very sincerely in the sentiments I have for you, your father, and your mother; and, shall I add, for Mrs. Shackleton? for I will not suppose myself a stranger to one who is so nearly related to you. I am now a married man myself; and therefore claim some respect from the married fraternity.<sup>2</sup> At least, for your own sake, you will not pretend to consider me as the worse man. I do not know whether it ever falls in your way to see Dr. Sleigh: he was not at school in my time, but I knew him in London, and I have known few more ingenious and valuable men. You see, my dear Shackleton, that I write you a rambling letter, without any connexion, just as the matters come into my head; but whatever I write, or in whatever way, believe me it is dictated by the sincerest regard to you, from him who is your truly affectionate and obliged friend,

EDM. BURKE.

<sup>1</sup> The work to which Burke here alludes, is his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, first published in 1756. His *Vindication of Natural Society* appeared in the same year.

<sup>2</sup> Early in this year (1757), Burke married Miss Jane Mary Nugent, daughter of Dr. Christopher Nugent, an eminent physician then residing at Bath.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM  
GERARD HAMILTON

*March, 1763.*

DEAR SIR,

I am now on the point of acquiring, through your friendship, an establishment,<sup>1</sup> which I am sensible is as much above my merits as, in any other channel, it may be above my reasonable expectations. I should think myself inexcusable in receiving this pension, and loading your interest with so heavy a charge, without apprizing you of those conditions on which, alone, I am able to take it; because, when I have taken it, I ought no longer to consider myself as possessed of my former freedom and independence.

I have often wished to explain myself fully to you on this point. It is against my general notions to trust to writing, where it is in one's power to confer otherwise. But neither do you hear, nor do I speak, on this subject, with the same ease with which we converse on others. This is but natural; and I have therefore chosen this method, as less liable to misunderstanding and dispute; and hope you will be so indulgent, as to hear me with coolness and attention.

You may recollect, when you did me the honour to take me as a companion in your studies, you found me with the little work we spoke of last Tuesday, as a sort of rent-charge on my thoughts. I informed you of this, and you acquiesced in it. You are now so generous (and it is but strict justice to allow, that upon all occasions you have been so), to offer to free me from this burden. But, in fact, though I am extremely desirous of deferring the accomplishment, I have no notion of entirely suppressing that work;

<sup>1</sup> The establishment to which Burke here alludes, was a pension of £300 per annum, from the Irish Treasury; granted in this year by Lord Halifax, then lord lieutenant of Ireland, upon the application of his Excellency's secretary, Hamilton, and through the influence of Colonel Cunningham and the Primate Stone.

and this upon two principles, not solely confined to that work, but which extend much farther, and indeed to the plan of my whole life.

Whatever advantages I have acquired, and even that advantage which I must reckon as the greatest and most pleasing of them, have been owing to some small degree of literary reputation. It will be hard to persuade me that any further services which your kindness may propose for me, or any in which my friends may wish to co-operate with you, will not be greatly facilitated by doing something to cultivate and keep alive the same reputation. I am fully sensible, that this reputation may be at least as much hazarded, as forwarded by new publications. But because a certain oblivion is the consequence, to writers of my inferior class, of an entire neglect of publication, I consider it such a risk as sometimes must be run. For this purpose, some short time, at convenient intervals, and especially at the dead time of the year, will be requisite to study and consult proper books. These times, as you very well know, cannot be easily defined; nor indeed is it necessary they should. The matter may be very easily settled by a good understanding between ourselves; and by a discreet liberty, which I think you would not wish to restrain, nor I to abuse. I am not so unreasonable, nor absurd enough, to think I have any title to so considerable a share in your interest as I have had, and hope still to have, without any or but an insignificant return on my side; especially as I am conscious that my best and most continued endeavours are of no very great value. I know that your business ought, on all occasions, to have the preference; to be the first and the last, and, indeed, in all respects, the main concern. All I contend for is, that I may not be considered as absolutely excluded from all other thoughts, in their proper time and due subordination; the fixing the times for them, to be left entirely to yourself.

I do not remember that, hitherto, any pursuit has been stopped, or any plan left defective, through my

inattention, or through my attention to other matters ; and I protest to God, I have applied to whatever you have thought proper to set me, with a vigour and alacrity, and even an eagerness, that I never felt in any affair of my own whatsoever. If you have not observed this, you have not, I think, observed with your usual sagacity. But if you have observed it, and attributed it to an interested design, which will cease when its end is in any degree answered, my mind bears me witness that you do not do me justice. I act almost always from my present impulse, and with little scheme or design ; and perhaps, generally, with too little. If you think what I have proposed unreasonable, my request is that you will, which you may very easily do, get my Lord Halifax to postpone the pension. and afterwards to drop it. We shall go on as before, until some other more satisfactory matter occurs. For I should ill brook an accusation, either direct or implied, that I had through your friendship acquired a considerable establishment, and afterwards neglected to make any fair return in my power. The thought of this has given me great pain ; and I would not be easy without coming to some explanation upon it. In the light I consider things, it can create no great difficulty ; but it may possibly, to you, appear otherwise. Let this be how it will, I can never forget the obligations—the very many and great obligations—which I have already had to you ; and which, in any situation, will always give you a right to call on me for anything within my compass. If I do not often acknowledge my sense of them, it is because I know you are not very fond of professions, nor am I very clever at making them. You will take in good part this liberty ; which, sincerely, is not made for the purpose of exercising my pen impertinently. Two words from you would settle the point, one way or another.

I am, with the utmost truth, ever yours,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM  
GERARD HAMILTON<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SIR,

Your letter, which I received about four o'clock yesterday, seemed not to have been written with an intention of being answered. However, on considering the matter this morning, I thought it respectful to you, and, in a manner, necessary to myself, to say something to those heavy charges which you have made against me in our last conversations; and which with a polite acrimony in the expression, you have thought proper to repeat in your letter.

I should, indeed, be extremely unhappy, if I felt any consciousness at all of that unkindness, of which you have so lively a sense. In the six years during which I have had the honour of being connected with you, I do not know that I have given you one just occasion of complaint; and if all things have not succeeded every way to your wishes, I may appeal to your own equity and candour, whether the failure was owing to any thing wrong in my advice, or inattention in my conduct; I can honestly affirm, and your heart will not contradict me, that in all cases I preferred your interest to my own. I made you, and not myself, the first object in every deliberation. I studied your advancement, your fortune, and your reputation in everything, with zeal and earnestness; and sometimes with an anxiety, which has made many of my hours miserable. Nobody could be more ready, than I was, to acknowledge the obligations I had to you; and if I thought, as in some instances I did, and do still think, I had cause of dissatisfaction, I never expressed it to others, or made yourself uneasy about them. I acted, in every respect, with a fidelity which, I trust, cannot be impeached. If there be any part of my conduct in life, upon which I can look with entire satisfaction, it is my behaviour with regard to you.

So far as to the past: with regard to the present,

<sup>1</sup> Letter undated in the original, but obviously of this time.

what is that unkindness and misbehaviour of which you complain? My heart is full of friendship to you; and is there a single point which the best and most intelligent men have fixed, as a proof of friendship and gratitude, in which I have been deficient, or in which I threaten a failure? What you blame is only this; that I will not consent to bind myself to you, for no less a term than my whole life, in a sort of domestic situation, for a consideration to be taken out of your private fortune; that is, to circumscribe my hopes, to give up even the possibility of liberty, and absolutely to annihilate myself for ever. I beseech you, is the demand, or the refusal, the act of unkindness? If ever such a test of friendship was proposed, in any instance, to any man living, I admit that my conduct has been unkind; and, if you please, ungrateful.

If I had accepted your kind offers, and afterwards refused to abide by the condition you annex to them, you then would have had a good right to tax me with unkindness. But what have I done, at the end of a very long, however I confess unprofitable, service, but to prefer my own liberty to the offers of advantage you are pleased to make me; and, at the same time, to tender you the continuance of those services (upon which, partiality alone induces you to set any value) in the most disinterested manner, as far as I can do it, consistent with that freedom to which, for a long time, I have determined to sacrifice every consideration; and which I never gave you the slightest assurance that I had any intention to surrender; whatever my private resolves may have been in case an event had happened, which (so far as concerns myself) I rejoice never to have taken place? You are kind enough to say, that you looked upon my friendship as valuable; but hint that it has not been lasting. I really do not know when, and by what act, I broke it off. I should be wicked and mad to do it; unless you call that a lasting friendship, which all mankind would call a settled servitude, and which no ingenuity can distinguish from it. Once more, put

yourself in my situation, and judge for me. If I have spoken too strongly, you will be so good as to pardon a man on his defence, in one of the nicest questions to a mind that has any feeling. I meant to speak fully, not to offend. I am not used to defend my conduct; nor do I intend, for the future, to fall into so bad a habit. I have been warmed to it by the imputation you threw on me; as if I deserted you on account solely of your want of success. On this, however, I shall say nothing, because perhaps I should grow still warmer; and I would not drop one loose word which might mark the least disrespect, and hurt a friendship which has been, and I flatter myself will be, a satisfaction and an honour to me. I beseech you that you will judge of me with a little impartiality and temper. I hope I have said nothing in our last interview which could urge you to the passion you speak of. If anything fell which was strong in the expression, I believe it was from you, and not from me, and it is right that I should bear more than I then heard. I said nothing, but what I took the liberty of mentioning to you a year ago, in Dublin: I gave you no reason to think I had made any change in my resolution. We, notwithstanding, have ever since, until within these few days, proceeded as usual. Permit me to do so again. No man living can have a higher veneration than I have, for your abilities; or can set a higher value on your friendship, as a great private satisfaction, and a very honourable distinction. I am much obliged to you for the favour you intend me, in sending to me in three or four days (if you do not send sooner); when you have had time to consider this matter coolly. I will again call at your door, and hope to be admitted; I beg it, and entreat it. At the same time do justice to the single motive which I have for desiring this favour, and desiring it in this manner. I have not wrote all this tiresome matter, in hopes of bringing on an altercation in writing, which you are so good to me as to decline personally; and which, in either way, I am most solicitous to shun.

What I say is, on reviewing it, little more than I have laid before you in another manner. It certainly requires no answer. I ask pardon for my prolixity, which my anxiety to stand well in your opinion has caused.

I am, with great truth,  
Your most affectionate and most obliged  
humble Servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOHN HELY  
HUTCHINSON, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

DEAR SIR,

It is so necessary for me to apologize for my long silence, and I am so unable to satisfy even my own ideas with any apology I can make, that I have twenty times begun to write, and as often desisted from my undertaking. The truth is, a certain awkwardness, arising from some late events, has added a good deal to my difficulties on this occasion. To write upon mere matters of indifference, when the very turning of my thoughts towards you filled my mind with those that were very interesting, would have given my letter an air of coldness and constraint very foreign from my natural manner, and very unlike the style in which I should always wish to converse with you. On the other hand, if my letter were to go impressed with the genuine feeling of my heart when it was full of resentment—and of resentment which had for its most just object one with whom I suppose you live in confidence and friendship, it might have had an appearance of disrespect; an appearance as contrary to the real sense I have of the honour you do me by your friendship, as any air of reserve would be to that openness and candour, which, I suppose, first recommended me to your regard, and which, I am sure, can

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and a privy-councillor in Ireland. The letter is not dated, but is evidently of this period.

alone make me worthy the continuance of it. On some deliberation, I think the safer course is to speak my mind freely; for, as Mr. Hamilton's calumnies (circulated by agents worthy of him) made it necessary for me to open myself to others, it might seem some sort of distrust of your equity, or my own innocence, if I held back from you, who know both the parties, and do not want sagacity to look into their true characters. I do not expect that you should honour me with an answer to this part of my letter, because a neutrality is all I can in reason expect; and, on this subject, I am perhaps less reasonable than I wish to be thought upon others; nothing less than whole approbation being sufficient to content me, and I can construe silence into what I please.

You are already apprized, by what Mr. H. has himself caused to be reported, that he has attempted to make a property—a piece of household goods of me, an attempt, in my poor opinion, as contrary to discretion as it is to justice; for he would fain have had a *slave*, which, as it is a being of no dignity, so it can be of very little real utility to its owner; and he refused to have a faithful *friend*, which is a creature of some rank, and (in whatever subject) no trivial or useless acquisition. But in this he is to be excused; for with as sharp and apprehensive parts, in many respects, as any man living, he never in reality did comprehend, even in theory, what friendship or affection was; being, as far as I was capable of observing, totally destitute of either friendship or enmity, but rather inclined to respect those who treat him ill. In spite of some knowledge and feeling of this part of his character, but actuated by a sense of what is owing to close connexion (upon whatsoever principles it might have been entered into), how faithful, how attached, and how zealous I have been to him you were yourself, in part, a witness; and though you could be so only in part, yet this was enough, I flatter myself, to let you see that I deserved to be considered in another manner than as one of Mr. H.'s cattle, or as a piece of

his household stuff. Six of the best years of my life he took me from every pursuit of literary reputation, or of improvement of my fortune. In that time he made his own fortune (a very great one), and he has also taken to *himself* the very little one which *I* had made. In all this time, you may easily conceive how much I felt at seeing myself left behind by almost all my contemporaries. There never was a season more favourable for any man who chose to enter into the career of public life ; and I think I am not guilty of ostentation, in supposing my own moral character, and my industry, my friends and connexions, when Mr. H. first sought my acquaintance, were not at all inferior to those of several whose fortune is, at this day, upon a very different footing from mine.

I suppose that, by this, my friend Mr. Ridge has informed you of the nature of the agreement which originally subsisted between that gentleman and me. He has, I suppose, let you into the manner in which it was fulfilled upon Mr. Hamilton's side—how that gentleman shifted and shuffled with me, in order to keep me in a state of perpetual dependence ; never made me an offer of indemnity for all his breaches of promise, nor even an apology, until he imagined it was probable that others were inclined to show me more attention than he did ; and then, having presumed to put a test to me which no man, not born in Africa, ever thought of taking, on my refusal, broke off all connexion with me in the most insolent manner. He, indeed, entered into two several negotiations afterwards ; but both poisoned, in their first principles, by the same spirit of injustice with which he set out, in his dealing towards me. I, therefore, could never give way to his proposals. The whole ended by his possessing himself of that small reward for my services, which, I since find, he had a very small share in procuring for me. After, or, indeed, rather during his negotiations, he endeavoured to stain my character and injure my future fortune by every calumny his malice could suggest. This is the sum of my con-

nexion with Mr. Hamilton. However, I am much obliged to him for having forcibly driven me from that imprisonment with him, from which, otherwise, I might never have had spirit enough to have delivered myself. This I thought it necessary to say to you, on the subject of a man with whom you still live in friendship, and with whom I have had, unfortunately, so close a connexion. You cannot think that, in using this freedom, I mean to deviate in the slightest degree from the real respect I ever entertained for your character, or from the gratitude I ought to feel for your obliging behaviour to me whilst I was in Ireland. Nobody has spoken, at all times, and in all companies, with more justice to the importance you may be of to any government, from your talents and your experience in business ; and though, from my situation in life, my opinion must be of very little consequence to your interest, it will speak for the fairness of my intentions with regard to you.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO J. MONCK MASON, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>  
1765.

MY DEAR MASON,

I am hardly able to tell you how much satisfaction I had in your letter. Your approbation of my conduct makes me believe much the better of both you and of myself and, I assure you, that that approbation came to me very seasonably. Such proofs of a warm, sincere, and disinterested friendship, were not wholly unnecessary to my support, at a time when I experienced such bitter effects of the perfidy and ingratitude of other much longer and much closer connexions. The way in which you take up my affairs, binds me to you in a manner I cannot express ; for, to tell you the truth, I never can (knowing, as I do, the principles upon which I always endeavour to act) submit to any sort of compromise of my character ; and I shall never, therefore, look upon those who, after hearing the

<sup>1</sup> Ancestor of the Earls of Rathdowne, and at this time in the barrack office in Dublin.

whole story, do not think me *perfectly* in the right, and do not consider Hamilton as an infamous scoundrel, to be in the smallest degree my friends, or even to be persons for whom I am bound to have the slightest esteem, as fair or just estimators of the characters and conduct of men. Situated as I am, and feeling as I do, I should be just as well pleased that they totally condemned me, as that they should say that there were faults on both sides, or that it was a disputable case, as I hear is (I cannot forbear saying) the affected language of some persons. Having let you into this, perhaps, weak part of my character, I must let you into another, which is, I confess, full as weak, and more blameable ; that is, some degree of mortification, which I cannot avoid feeling, at the letters I receive, almost daily, and from several hands, from Dublin, giving me an account of a violent outcry of ingratitude which is there raised against me. If the absurdity of an accusation were a sufficient antidote against the poison of it, this would, I suppose, be the most innocent charge in the world ; but if its absurdity weakens the force of it to the conviction of others, it adds to my feeling of it, when I reflect that there is any person, who has ever seen my face, that can listen to such a calumny. H.'s emissaries do more for him than he has ever attempted to do for himself. He charges me with receiving that pension during the king's pleasure (in getting me which he had the least share of four who were engaged in it), not as a favour, but as the consideration of a bargain and sale of my liberty and existence. It cannot be at once a voluntary benefit claiming gratitude, and a mercenary consideration exacting service. They may, if they are contented to speak a consistent falsehood, accuse me of breach of faith ; but they can never say, without nonsense, as well as injustice, that I am ungrateful, until they can prove that some favour was intended to me. In regard to their own understanding, they will be so gracious as to drop one or the other of the charges. In modesty they ought to drop both of them ; unless serving their

friend with six of the best years of my life, whilst he acquired at their expense a ministerial fortune ; and then, after giving him my labour, giving him also a pension of £300 a year : unless these be thought as great faults to him, as perhaps they were toward the public ; and unless those delicate friends of his do not think their late grateful, sincere, disinterested secretary has got enough on their establishment. You cannot avoid remarking, my dear Mason, and I hope not without some indignation, the unparalleled singularity of my situation. Was ever a man, before me, expected to enter into formal, direct, undisguised slavery ? Did ever man before him confess an attempt to decoy a man into such an illegal contract, not to say anything of the impudence of regularly pleading it ? If such an attempt be wicked and unlawful (and I am sure no one ever doubted it), I have only to confess his charge, and to admit myself his dupe, to make him pass, on his own showing, for the most consummate villain that ever lived. The only difference between us is, not whether he is not a rogue, for he not only admits but pleads the facts that demonstrate him to be so, but only whether I was such a fool as to sell myself absolutely, for a consideration which, so far from being adequate, if any such could be adequate, is not even so much as certain. Not to value myself as a gentleman, a freeman, a man of education, and one pretending to literature, is there any situation in life so low, or even so criminal, that can subject a man to the possibility of such an engagement ? Would you dare attempt to bind your footman to such terms ? Will the law suffer a felon, sent to the plantations, to bind himself for his life, and to renounce all possibility either of elevation or quiet ? And am I to defend myself for not doing what no man is suffered to do, and what it would be criminal in any man to submit to ? You will excuse me for this heat, which will, in spite of one, attend and injure a just cause ; whilst common judgements look upon coolness as a proof of innocence, though it never fails to go along with guilt

and ability. But this is the real state of the affair. Hamilton, indeed, I hear has the impudence to pretend that my leaving him and going to Mr. T. is the cause of our rupture. This is, I assure you, an abominable falsehood. I never had more than a very slight acquaintance with Mr. T. till long after our rupture. O'Hara, through whom a part of the negotiation passed, will let you see that our rupture had no sort of relation to him. But Ridge will explain this point to you at large. You will show this as much as you like to any of our common friends, meaning that Hamilton should know in what a manner I speak of him on all occasions.

You are, my dear Mason, by your Bedford connexion, involved in the support of Lord W.'s<sup>1</sup> Government (and I could heartily wish that your task were less difficult); with an unsupported and beggared Lord Lieutenant, attended with officers, to do business at a doubtful time, the best of them with middling ability, and no experience. My Lord Lieutenant himself is a genteel man, and of excellent natural sense, as is universally said. I wish it may turn out for your advantage, and that the barrack-board may be, not a bench, but a step of the stairs. You know, I suppose, that Hamilton endeavoured by his connexion with the Thynnes, to intrude into that family; and wanted to stipulate, for a month or six weeks' service, to get for a cousin of his a deanery; but I imagine they hear on all hands . . .<sup>2</sup>

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO HENRY FLOOD, ESQ.<sup>3</sup>

*May 18, 1765.*

MY DEAR FLOOD,

I thank you for your very kind and most obliging letter. You are a person whose good offices are not snares, and to whom one may venture to be obliged,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Weymouth; appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland in May 1765.

<sup>2</sup> The draft from which this is taken is incomplete.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Henry Flood, at this time a member of the Irish

without danger to his honour. As I depend upon your sincerity, so I shall most certainly call upon your friendship, if I should have any thing to do in Ireland. This, however, is not the case at present, at least in any way in which your interposition may be employed, with a proper attention to yourself, a point which I shall always very tenderly consider in any applications I make to my friends.

It is very true that there is an eternal rupture between me and Hamilton, which was, on my side, neither sought nor provoked. For though his conduct in public affairs has been for a long time directly contrary to my opinion, very reproachful to himself, and extremely disgustful to me; and though, in private, he has not justly fulfilled one of his engagements to me, yet I was so uneasy and awkward at coming to a breach, where I had once a close and intimate friendship, that I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to his cause and person; and when I found him greatly disposed to quarrel with me, I used such submissive measures as I never before could prevail on myself to use to any man. The occasion of our difference was not any act whatsoever on my part; it was entirely upon his; by a voluntary, but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving to me, at any time, a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring with tranquillity. This was really and truly the substance of his demand upon me, to which I need not tell you that I refused, with some degree of indignation, to submit. On this, we ceased to see each other, or to correspond, a good while before you left London. He then commenced, through the intervention of others, a negotiation with me, in which he showed as much of meanness in his proposals, House of Commons, and subsequently one of the vice-treasurers of Ireland, and a privy-councillor in both kingdoms. He sat in the English House of Commons from 1783 to his death in 1791.

as he had done of arrogance in his demands ; but as all those proposals were vitiated by the taint of that servitude with which they were all mixed, his negotiation came to nothing. He grounded those monstrous claims (such as never were before heard of in this country) on that pension which he had procured for me through Colonel Cunningham, the late Primate, and Lord Halifax ; for through all that series of persons this paltry business was contrived to pass. Now, though I was sensible that I owed this pension to the goodness of the Primate, in a great degree, and though, if it had come from Hamilton's pocket, instead of being derived from the Irish Treasury, I had earned it by a long and laborious attendance, and might, in any other than that unfortunate connexion, have got a much better thing, yet, to get rid of him completely, and not to carry even a memorial of such a person about me, I offered to transfer it to his attorney, in trust for him. This offer he thought proper to accept. I beg pardon, my dear Flood, for troubling you so long, on a subject which ought not to employ a moment of your thoughts, and never shall again employ a moment of mine.

To your inquiry concerning some propositions in a certain assembly, of a nature injurious to Ireland, since your departure, I know none of that kind, except one made by a Mr. Shiffner, to lessen the number of ports of entry in Britain and Ireland allowed for the trade of wool and woollen-yarn of the growth of the latter country. This attempt was grounded on the decrease of the import of those commodities from Ireland, which they rashly attributed to the greater facility of the illicit transport of wool from Ireland to France, by the indulgence of a number of ports. This idea, founded in an ignorance of the nature of the Irish trade, had weight with some persons ; but the decreased import of Irish wool and yarn being accounted for upon true and rational principles, in a short memorial delivered to Mr. Townshend, he saw at once into it with his usual sagacity,

and he has silenced this complaint, at least for this session. Nothing else was done or meant, that I could discover, though I have not been inattentive; and I am not without good hopes, that the menaces in the beginning of the session will end as they began, only in idle and imprudent words. At least, there is a strong probability that new men will come in, and, not improbably, with new ideas. At this very instant the causes productive of such a change are strongly at work. The Regency Bill has shown such want of concert and want of capacity in the ministers, such an inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design *against* it—such imposition and surprise upon the king, and such a misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the Sovereign, that there is no doubt there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (unless, perhaps, of Grenville), but principally of the Duke of Bedford. So that you will have much more reason to be surprised to find the ministry standing by the end of next week, than to hear of their entire removal. Nothing but an intractable temper in your friend Pitt, can prevent a most admirable and lasting system from being put together; and this crisis will show whether pride or patriotism be predominant in his character; for you may be assured, that he has it now in his power to come into the service of his country, upon any plan of politics he may choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and to every friend he has in the world; and with such a stretch of power, as will be equal to everything but absolute despotism, over the king and kingdom. A few days will show whether he will take this part, or that of continuing on his back at Hayes, talking fustian, excluded from all ministerial, and incapable of all parliamentary service; for his gout is worse than ever, but his pride may disable him more than his gout. These matters so fill our imaginations here, that with our mob of six or seven thousand weavers, who pursue the ministry, and do not leave them quiet or safety in their houses, we have little to think of

other things. However, I will send you the new edition of Swift's posthumous works. I doubt you can hardly read this hand; but it is very late. Mrs. Burke has been ill, and recovers but slowly. She desires her respects to you and Lady Frances. Julia is much obliged to you: Will. Burke always remembers you with affection; and so does,

My dear Flood,

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

E. BURKE.

Pray remember me to Langrishe, and to Leland and Bowden. Dr. Nugent desires his compliments to you in the strongest manner. He has conceived a very high esteem for you.

EDMUND BURKE. ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
· ROCKINGHAM <sup>1</sup>

*Dublin, August 21, 1766.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I have let slip a post since my arrival in Dublin, without paying my respects to you on your arrival at Wentworth. I am ashamed of the appearance of a neglect so contrary to my duty, and (I hope you will believe) to my sentiments. The truth is, I wished to learn a little of the *bon-ton* of this place, relative to the late and present administration, before I troubled you with a letter. This great town is, indeed, at present, only a great desert; but amongst those who remain, there is but one opinion with regard to your lordship. They are loud in declaring that no minister ever went through employment, or retired out of it, with so much true honour and reputation. About the new system, there is much doubt and uneasiness. There is still a little twilight of popularity remaining

<sup>1</sup> Charles, second Marquis of Rockingham, who came into office at the head of the Treasury, in 1765, and appointed Burke his private secretary.

round the great peer,<sup>1</sup> but it fades away every moment ; and the people here, who, in general, only reflect back the impressions of London, are growing quite out of humour with him. We have odd accounts from thence, of which it is not very easy to find the solution. I begin almost to fear, that your lordship left town a little too early. I think your friends must, since then, have wanted your advice on more than one occasion. Am I to attribute the resignation of Saunders to his having received some new instance of disregard from the great disposer ? I thought it was a settled point, that none should go out without the concurrence of the party. But gentlemen, who are really such, do not easily submit their feelings to their politics. After this, can Keppel, or any of the rest, stay in ? And is Lord Egmont's resignation the effect also of temper ?<sup>2</sup> That event, I own, surprises me. It looks as if Mr. Pitt would find that the offer of privy-seal of Scotland was by no means sufficient for Lord Bute.<sup>3</sup> Nothing but weakness appears in the whole fabric of his ministry ; yet I do not see what strength the party is likely to derive from thence. His necessities and his anger may drive him into the arms of the Bedfords ; for, I confess, I think he is gone too far to think of returning to the good ground which he originally declined to stand upon. I saw in the Chronicle an account of the address ;<sup>4</sup> and, I confess, I have seldom in my life been more thoroughly mortified. It was not very long ; it was really simple, neat, and elegant. The abstracting

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Chatham.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Egmont, who came in with the Marquis of Rockingham, as First Lord of the Admiralty, does not appear to have quitted office until the 16th Sept. 1766.

<sup>3</sup> The privy-seal of Scotland was given to the Right Hon. James Stuart Mackenzie, brother to Lord Bute, on the 30th of August, 1766.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Burke probably alludes to an address presented to the Marquis of Rockingham on the 6th of August in this year, by a deputation from the merchants of London, trading to the West Indies and North America.

(which, by the way, was not very well done), did great mischief to it. I do not like your lordship's method of putting your popularity into your cabinet, like a curious medal. It is current coin, or it is nothing. I am really vexed; as I think, properly managed, it would have led the other towns. May I flatter myself, that whenever your lordship has a leisure moment, I may be favoured with your remembrance and your directions? You would not do me justice, if you thought any person attached to your interest, your honour, or your satisfaction, with a warmer zeal than,

My lord,

Your most obedient, and ever obliged,  
humble servant,

E. BURKE.

I beg your lordship will present my humble respects, with those of Mrs. Burke, to Lady Rockingham. I hope the air of Wentworth has re-established her health. I just hear that they are negotiating with Yorke;<sup>1</sup> I fear for him.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Parson's Green, August 1, 1767.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I hope you have by this time got over a little of your Yorkshire bustle, after escaping so much to your credit from the bustle of Westminster.<sup>2</sup> Your lordship's conduct has certainly been very honourable to yourself, and very pleasing to your friends. If we may judge

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Charles Yorke, second son of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Burke here alludes to overtures for a union of parties, by the junction of the Marquis of Rockingham and the Duke of Bedford, with the Chatham and Grafton administration. The negotiations were broken off by Lord Rockingham's refusal to take office, unless with his whole party, and the appointment of a leader in the House of Commons.

from appearances, the consequences which have attended it are not very displeasing to your enemies. His majesty never was in better spirits. He has got a ministry weak and dependent; and, what is better, willing to continue so. They all think they have very handsomely discharged any engagements of honour they might have had to your lordship; and, to say the truth, seem not very miserable at being rid of you. They are certainly determined to hold with the present garrison, and to make the best agreement they can amongst themselves; for this purpose they are negotiating something with Charles Townshend.<sup>1</sup> Lord Bute is seldom a day out of town: I cannot find whether he confers directly and personally with the ministry, but am told he does. I saw General Conway<sup>2</sup> a day or two after you left us. I never knew him talk in a more alert, firm, and decided tone. There was not the slightest trace of his usual diffidence and hesitation. He lamented your lordship's mistake in not coming into administration at this juncture. But, I declare, his conversation did, to me, more thoroughly justify your non-acceptance, than anything I had heard, either from yourself or others, on that subject, as it laid open more clearly the ideas upon which they went in treating with you. Their plan, in short, was, that your lordship, with a few only of the chief of your friends, should take offices; and that the rest should wait those vacancies which death, and occasional arrangements, might make in a course of time. He dwelt much upon the advantages which had attended this method of proceeding, when Mr. Pitt acceded to the old administration in 1757. Though I felt indignation enough at this comparison of times and persons, I could hardly help laughing at the notion of providing for a party, upon a system which supposed the long and steady continuance of the same administra-

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Charles Townshend, at this time Chancellor of the Exchequer. He died in September of this year.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Seymour Conway, brother of Lord Hertford.

tion. I told him that your lordship's opinion of the duty of a leader of party was to take more care of his friends than of himself; and that the world greatly mistook you if they imagined that you would come in otherwise than in *corps*; and that after you had thought your own whole bottom too narrow, you would condescend to build your administration on a foundation still narrower; and give up (for that it would be) many of your own people, in order to establish your irreconcilable enemies in those situations which had formerly enabled, and would again enable them to distress, probably to destroy you. That, beyond this, he was not less fond of a system of extermination than you were. I said a great deal, and with as much freedom as consisted with carrying on the discourse in good humour, of the power and dispositions of the Bute party, the use they had made of their power in your time, and the formidable increase and full establishment of that power, which must be the necessary consequence of the part which our former friends in office seemed just now inclined to take. This discourse had no sort of effect. The Bute influence had lost all its terrors. An apprehension of Grenville's<sup>1</sup> coming in, was the ostensible objection to every thing. Much moderation towards the king's friends, and many apologies for every part of their conduct. In the end he said (I think, directly, but I am sure in effect), that as long as the Duke of Grafton<sup>2</sup> thought it for his honour to stay in, he could not resign. I have troubled you with this conversation, as it seemed to me very fully to indicate the true spirit of the ministry. I am quite satisfied that if ever the court had any real

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. George Grenville, brother of Earl Temple, and First Lord of the Treasury from April 1763 to July 1765, when he gave way to the Marquis of Rockingham. He died in 1770.

<sup>2</sup> Augustus Henry, third Duke of Grafton, then First Lord of the Treasury, which office His Grace held until 1770. He was Privy Seal in the Rockingham administration of 1782.

intention that your lordship should come in, it was merely to office, and not to administration; to lower your character, and entirely to disunite the party. This you have escaped. All of the party who are capable of judging, and supplied with materials for it, will rejoice in your escape; but there are some who feel anxious and uneasy, as if an opportunity of getting into power had missed upon mere points of delicacy. Lord Edgumbe wrote lately to Lord Besborough: the Princess Amelia is down with him. He is frightened out of his wits: all his information comes from that quarter. Does not your lordship think, that a word from you to set the matter to rights, as to the rupture of both negotiations, might be useful with regard to him? He is wofully impatient. You see, my lord, that by giving you so free an account of my conversation with Conway, this letter is only for yourself. Lord John Cavendish<sup>1</sup> might, indeed, have given you the whole of it, as well as of his own; but I apprehend that he will have an opportunity of conveying this to your lordship, before he can see you. Be so good as to present my humble respects to my Lady Rockingham; and believe me, with the truest esteem and attachment,

My dear lord, ever yours,  
E. BURKE.

Hopkins has the green cloth, Lowndes's brother the excise, and Bradshaw is secretary to the treasury. Wedderburne<sup>2</sup> is gone the north circuit: he told me he would wait on your lordship at Wentworth.

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Cavendish came into office as a Junior Lord of the Treasury with the Rockingham administration, in 1765, and went out with his party in the following year. He came again into place with Lord Rockingham, in 1782, when he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, which post he also filled in the coalition ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Earl of Rosslyn, and Lord High Chancellor of England.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM*Parson's Green, August 18, 1767.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I was just on the point of writing when I received your letter by Lord Albemarle. I am glad he was with you at Wentworth, and that you had an opportunity of confirming him in the sentiments which so handsomely arose in his own breast, on the first representation of the late business. Upon my word, everything I see of that family, increases my opinion (originally no small one) of their honour, spirit, and steadiness. I found the admiral<sup>1</sup> at Goodwood, and came to town with him. He is very right, and the more laudably so, as he is not without a strong feeling of the inconveniences attending a protracted opposition from the craving demands of friends and dependents, who will very little enter into the motives to a conduct which stands between them and all their wants and expectations. He had a good deal of talk with the Duke of Richmond, and I had some. I saw in him many signs of uneasiness, but none of wavering. His grace cannot be persuaded of the propriety of not accepting the late offers, or, at least, of not having gone further than you did, so as to put all the ministers in the wrong, by driving them to avow more of a closet system, than they would willingly profess to the world. There was great good opinion (amounting to veneration) of your lordship, much satisfaction in the principles of the party, but still a leaning to Conway, and a dislike to the Grenvilles, which operate powerfully towards the doctrine of acceptance. He fears that the corps which will neither unite with the other squadrons in opposition, nor accept the offers made by administration, must, in the nature of things, be dissolved very speedily, and perhaps not very reputably, as being,

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Augustus Keppel, brother to George, third Earl of Albemarle.

to appearance, destitute of anything like a certain object. I combated this opinion in the best manner I could. The duke said nothing to me of the part he should take in the next session. I did not, indeed, at all lead the conversation that way, thinking the ground delicate, and that, in matters of this sort, men are more safely trusted to the natural operation of things, as they strike their own minds, than to any engagements. Keppel went farther, and to him he was more explicit. He seemed greatly at a loss for what you meant to pursue ; but was extremely willing to take a warm and vigorous part with your lordship, in case you could come to settle some distinct plan of political and parliamentary conduct. Keppel has no doubt of him ; I have as little hesitation about his honour, but he has an anxious, busy mind. Work must be cut out for him, or he will not be satisfied easily. If this be done, I am persuaded he will be faithful and resolute ; and I am sure he is an essential part of the strength of your body. The admiral joins in my opinion of the necessity of your lordship's writing to him, once or twice, during the recess : some attentions of this sort will be expedient to continue him in affection to the cause, and to counterbalance the influence of Lord Holland, always the king's friend, and of General Conway, newly adopted into that corps, and probably with all the zeal of a new convert. It is no reflection on his grace to suppose that, in some way or other, these influences so natural, and in some respects so little blameable, should have their weight.

I beg pardon, for having run on so long upon this topic. When I know Mr. Dowdeswell's <sup>1</sup> time, I will obey your lordship's commands without delay. Of the Grenvilles I hear nothing. In spite of themselves,

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. William Dowdeswell, Member of Parliament for Worcestershire, a Privy Counsellor, and Chancellor of the Exchequer during the Rockingham administration of 1765-6. He was afterwards considered the leader of the Rockingham party in the House of Commons.

they are compelled for a while to be quiet, and to play no tricks. Conway is gone fairly to the devil. Lord Frederick Campbell is secretary to the lord lieutenant. This is Conway's job. Conway is also to have Lord Townshend's ordnance ; but for the present, I hear, declines the salary. I hear too, that Pynsent is to be sold ; but I don't know who the purchaser is. The Duke of Newcastle grumbles as usual. There is one point in which I incline to join with him,—that of elections. Surely, if there be, as there are, monied men in the party, they ought not to let the venal boroughs get engaged in the manner they are likely to be. Adieu, my dear lord ; you will be so good as to forgive this tedious letter, to present my humble respects to my Lady Rockingham, and to believe me, with the greatest esteem and affection, ever your lordship's most obliged, and most obedient humble servant,

E. BURKE.

Lord Chesterfield has been ill, and dangerously so ; but I am told is recovering. If he should die this time, the county of Buckingham would become suddenly vacant. Lord Verney, on this idea, desires to know what your wishes on this subject would be, and in what way his interest (always at the service of the cause) may be useful.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Gregories, near Beaconsfield, May, 1, 1768.*

MY DEAR SHACKLETON,

I thank you heartily for your letter, and even for the reproaches which it contains. They are, when of that kind, very sure, and not the most displeasing, indications of a real affection. Indeed, my neglect of writing is by no means justifiable, and does not stand well in my own opinion ; but I am sorry to say it, I have never been quite correct and finished in my style of life ; and I fear I never shall. However, if I keep the principal parts tolerably right, I shall,

I hope, meet pardon, if not something more, from such friends as it is the great blessing of my life to have had, in every stage of it. As to the neglects of one who is but too much my brother, I have nothing to say for him. He may write himself, if he pleases; and he has nothing to prevent him but too much idleness, which I have observed fills up a man's time much more completely, and leaves him less his own master, than any sort of employment whatsoever.

I am much obliged to Mr. Beauchamp for his kind opinion of me, and to your partial representations as the cause of it. I am willing to do my best to forward Dr. Dunkin's subscription. You may easily believe that your wishing well to it, will be sufficient to engage my endeavours (as far as they can go) without any further inducement. But Dunkin deserved some rank among the poets of our time and country; and I agree with you in thinking his son an ingenious and worthy man. I cannot, I fear, do a great deal. I am always ready to subscribe myself, and, perhaps, in general, too ready to put forward subscriptions, which weakens my interest when I want to use it on some extraordinary occasions. I don't say this as in the least declining the business you recommended, for I will certainly do all I can.

I know your kindness makes you wish, now and then, to hear of my situation. As to myself, I am, by the very singular kindness of some friends, in a way very agreeable to me. Again elected on the same interest,<sup>1</sup> I have made a push, with all I could collect of my own, and the aid of my friends, to cast a little root in this country. I have purchased a house, with an estate of about six hundred acres of land, in Buckinghamshire, twenty-four miles from London, where I now am.<sup>2</sup> It is a place exceedingly pleasant;

<sup>1</sup> In the Parliament which met on the 10th May, 1768, Mr. Burke was again returned for Wendover, through the interest of Lord Verney.

<sup>2</sup> This place, called Gregories in the more ancient deeds, and Gregories or Butler's Court in some of later date,

and I propose (God willing) to become a farmer in good earnest. You, who are classical, will not be displeased to hear that it was formerly the seat of Waller the poet, whose house, or part of it, makes at present the farm-house within an hundred yards of me. When you take a journey to England, you are obliged, by tenure, to come and pay due homage to the capital seat of your once favourite poet.

I am glad to find my venerable old friend, your father, still preserves his health, and the even tenor of his mind. At her age, no friend could have hoped for your mother anything but the Euthanasia; and in such circumstances, it must have been a great comfort to you that she had it so perfectly.

Mrs. Burke preserves an affectionate and grateful memory of Mrs. Shackleton's kindness to her when she was in Ireland, and joins us all in the heartiest salutations to you both.

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me  
most sincerely yours,  
E. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, July 18, 1768.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I intended to have written by the Duke of Portland, who was so kind as to spend a part of a day with us, but I am afraid I shall not be able to avail myself of the opportunity. Some company came upon me after his grace's departure, who have taken up my time, so that I fear he will be set out for the north, before I can send this to him. Indeed, I have little worth your hearing to communicate. Such accounts as I picked up when I was last in town, will rather serve as an excuse for my troubling your lordship, than at all contribute to your information concerning the present continued from this time in the family of Burke, until the death of his widow, in 1812.

posture of things. Lord Shelburne still continues in administration, though as adverse and as much disliked as ever. The minister for Turin is not yet declared. I hear it said, and I believe with truth, that his majesty declined having anything to do with the decision of this business, but recommended them to settle it among themselves, as well as they could. This does not seem to be much out of character; nor is it, I think, the most favourable symptom in the world to the power of the Duke of Grafton, who continues, as I hear, his old complaints of his situation, and his genuine desire of holding it as long as he can. At the same time, Lord Shelburne gets loose too. I know that Lord Camden, who adhered to him in these late divisions, has given him up, and gone over to the Duke of Grafton. The Bedfords are horridly frightened at all this, for fear of seeing the table they had so well covered, and at which they sat down with so good an appetite, kicked down in the scuffle. They advised that things should not be brought to extremities. They find things not ripe, at present, for bringing in Grenville; and that any capital remove just now, would only betray their weakness in the closet and in the nation. Will. Burke met Dr. Hay: they had a great deal of very serious conversation, not to say earnest and eager, on the part of the doctor. I mention it, rather to show the disposition of that faction, and the tone of their politics, than because I am sure it was meant as an opening to any future negotiation. Hay expressed a great desire of seeing you in government, upon proper terms, with the Bedfords; lamented the exclusive and proscriptive spirit of your party, which he feared would make such a union difficult; and said, that if it were not your own fault, it would be extremely easy to form a strong and permanent system. George Grenville was mentioned as a very proper matter of consideration, but he did not insist over much on that point; did not know why it should be an indispensable condition that your lordship should be at the head of the treasury; and why some other

great situation, with a fair proportion of power, might not answer the purpose as well; that if Grenville was particularly exceptionable, another middle person might have the treasury: who was that middle person? They had him in their eye, but would not name him before they knew that the general proposition would be accepted. He spoke of the ministry as a strange incoherent composition, that certainly would not stand. This he considered as a matter beyond dispute. On W. Burke's relating this conversation to me, I fancy their middle man to be the same they had in their thoughts this time twelvemonth—Lord Gower,<sup>1</sup> for they spoke much the same language, however ill the epithet of middleman agreed with their idea. But on talking with Fitzherbert, on a certain rap of the knuckles which the Butes had given to the Bedfords, he said he wondered at it, because he knew that their style was to talk very civilly of the Butes, and even to go so far as to name the Duke of Northumberland<sup>2</sup> as a proper person for the treasury, in case of the Duke of Grafton going out. This seems, if true, to let in a little light upon Hay's system. Will. Burke told him, that he did not conceive what man they could name so worthy as your lordship, of the joint confidence of parties, who had never been known to deceive any party or any individual, or who to conduct government better, from the confidence which the whole mercantile interest had in you; besides the large and respectable following of individuals. The junction they seemed to wish, he said, had been in their own power last year, but that they were too hungry to accept it; that it would, among others, have brought them this advantage, it would have acquired them a little character. The truth is, the Bedfords will never act any part, either fair or amicable, with your lordship or your

<sup>1</sup> One of the Duke of Bedford's party, who had joined the Chatham and Grafton administration in the last year, 1767; being appointed president of the council, which office he still held.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh, first Duke of Northumberland.

friends, until they see you in a situation to give the law to them; and all attempts towards it, before that time, will be not only useless but dangerous. I have plagued you a good deal with political chat, which you have, so far as it is authentic, probably received already in a much better manner.

We have had incessant rains. My clover is got in, in a tolerable manner, but at a heavy expense. About fourteen or fifteen acres of natural grass are down already, under a deluge of rain. The farmers here apprehend a poor harvest, as the corn has suffered a good deal whilst in the flower. I have just got an account from my friend in Ireland, that the bull will be exceedingly acceptable. At the same time that I return my thanks for him, I must entreat your lordship to order him to be sent to Mr. Felix Doran, a merchant and a friend at Liverpool, who will transmit him to Dublin.

Your lordship will be so good as to present my respects to Lady Rockingham; and to believe me, with the most sincere attachment,

My dear lord,  
Your most affectionate and obedient  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, Sunday night, half after 10,  
July 2, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I am beyond expression obliged to your lordship for your very full, very satisfactory, and very friendly letter, which I found at home on my return from my evening walk. I wish, indeed, that so great a pleasure to me had been purchased at the expense of less fatigue to yourself, for I know and feel what an irksome task the writing of long letters is; and there was nothing

I was so much surprised at, in the late Duke of Newcastle, as that immense and almost incredible ease, with which he was able to dispatch such an infinite number of letters. That employment seemed to be a sort of recreation to him. I am glad that your lordship's recreation at Harrowden was of another kind. I am sure it must be extremely serviceable, as well as delightful to you, to have enjoyed that interval of ease between the hurry of London and the hurry of Yorkshire; and it was extremely well thought on, to cut this moment of perfect tranquillity out of your busy life. I really think such moments ought to be caught and improved as often as possible.

I am very glad to find that something is to be done in Yorkshire relative to the late determination.<sup>1</sup> I am quite pleased with your lordship's plan for the instructions in every particular, provided instructions (or thanks, which are tantamount but more respectful,) should be the mode proposed. But I confess I am, when the objects are well chosen, rather more fond of the method of petition, because it carries more the air of uniformity and concurrence; and, being more out of the common road, and yet, I apprehend, constitutional enough, it will be more striking and more suitable to the magnitude of the occasion. There is a further reason which weighs with me even more than the former. I observe, that the court cares very little what becomes of the people in ministerial situations, whether they are odious or not, or whether they get through their business easily and gracefully, or struggle with the most embarrassing and scandalous difficulties. What they suffer makes no impression; but I observe them to be much alarmed with whatever is brought directly into the king's presence. Nothing can tend more to bring the whole system into disrepute and disgust with him, than to see with his own eyes and hear with his own ears the effect it has upon the

<sup>1</sup> The rejection of Wilkes, and return of Luttrell, for Middlesex, by the House of Commons.

people. His feeling in this manner the ill consequences of the system will, I am persuaded, be the only means of bringing on that *only* change which can do good, I mean the change of the whole scheme of weak, divided, and dependent administrations. However, I beg pardon if I have urged this too much. The grand point, to be sure, is a strong and natural expression of dislike to *our* elections for Middlesex. I would just submit, whether giving thanks (so far as regards this question) for what is passed, be sufficient; but that something of a request with regard to *redress and prevention*, in so interesting and important a point of public liberty, should be strongly pressed. I am sure I am far from thinking your lordship's expressions on this subject to be too warm. The address ought to be firm and full of vigour; and I rather think that the thanks for the *nullum tempus*, both the first and the last, were rather too short and general. I am no great friend, in general, of long-winded performances; but certainly the very length of these things greatly aids the impression in several instances. The Surrey address is solely confined to the Middlesex election, which is certainly the best of two *extremes*. I call this an *extreme*, because, certainly, our voting the *civil list debt*<sup>1</sup> without account, besides other proceedings, merit a very large share of censure, and might, at least, be involved in general terms. I forgot to mention a thing that just struck me, relative to that hint of general warrants. Your lordship sees that it will require some delicacy to keep up that very right idea of your lordship's, 'that they should recollect to what party they are obliged for that determination,' without seeming to put a studied affront on G. G., with whom an appearance of union at this time, and on this measure, may be very necessary.

I had yesterday, on my return from town, a note

<sup>1</sup> A sum exceeding £500,000 was granted to pay off a debt on the civil list, without due inquiry or the production of papers.

from the Duke of Richmond. It was to tell me that he proposed to dine with me on his way from Park-place. I was unluckily in London, and so missed of him.

Sir W. Meredith's pamphlet is out, and, I believe, liked; but I know very little of what is said and done. My brother has got a present of an *anonymous* fowl from the West Indies. It is not ugly, and may be curious; he has sent it to Grosvenor Square, and takes the liberty of requesting Lady Rockingham's acceptance of it.

I am afraid of detaining your servant longer. If anything should occur, I may trouble your lordship with it another time.

Surely your lordship's sentiments about Sir George Colebrooke are as proper as possible; and I beg you will not think I presumed to press upon you things of that nature, when I knew your hands to be previously so very full. I ought to ask a thousand pardons for troubling you in any way about them; but they would have been apt to attribute my refusal to apply to ill-nature, or a worse motive, if worse there be. A thousand thanks for what you have done, which was more by a great deal than I could in reason have expected. Adieu, my dear lord, and do me the justice to believe me, with the truest and heartiest affection,

Your lordship's ever obliged and obedient  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, Sunday, July 9, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I was on the point of sitting down to trouble your lordship with a word or two more, on the subject of your last letter, when I heard from Will. Burke that he had seen Lord Chatham pass by, on his return from St. James's, and that he had certainly been in the closet. He did not continue there above twenty

minutes. It is not yet known whether he was sent for, or went of his own mere motion. If he was sent for, the shortness of the conference seems to indicate that nothing at all has been settled. If he was not sent for, it was only humbly to lay a reprimand at the feet of his most gracious master, and to talk some significant, pompous, creeping, explanatory, ambiguous matter, in the true Chathamian style, and that's all. If, indeed, a change is thought on, I make no doubt but they will aim at the choice of him, as the puller-down of the old, and the architect of the new fabric. If so, the building will not, I suspect, be executed in a very workmanlike manner, and can hardly be such as your lordship will choose to be lodged in, though you should be invited to the state apartment in it;—which, however, will not be the event, whether the arrangement is made agreeably to the inclination of Lord Chatham, or of those who employ him. The plan of the court (coinciding sufficiently with his dispositions, but totally adverse to your principles and wishes), would be to keep the gross of the present ministry as the body of the place, and to buttress it up with the Grenvilles and the Shelburne people. This arrangement would partly resist, and partly dissipate the present storm. It would give them a degree of present strength, much wanting in this ugly crisis of their affairs, and which, it would be admitted, is considerable, without subjecting them to the effects of that plan of connexion which is the greatest of all possible terrors to the Bute faction. Whatever they may do, or threaten at court, I should fancy your lordship's conduct will not be affected by it one way or the other. If I have any guess, from public appearance or private information, it is steadily adverse (as far as there is steadiness in any of its dispositions) to your lordship, to your friends, and to your principles. Your strength is of another kind, and, I trust, a better. The sole method of operating upon them, because they have no other standard of respect, is by fear. They will never give your lordship credit for your moderation. Your doing but little, will be

attributed to your not being in a situation to do more. With regard to your own friends, a certain delicacy of management (which is one of the things in which you excel) is certainly very proper, and much in the tenor of your whole conduct; but so far as the court is concerned, the most effectual method seems to be far the best, and I could wish your lordship to choose such time, place, and manner for carrying through the business concerning the right of election, as will have most of a sober and well-conducted energy in it, without the smallest regard to their opinions or their representations. Far from shunning the appearance of a lead in this business, it would be every way better, that they thought the whole manœuvre as much owing to your lordship's weight in your county, and to your activity in exerting it, as to the general sense and inclination of the people, merely left to themselves. It is the true terror of those who take the lead in the scheme of private influence, to find that the people have their leaders too, in whom they repose a perfect confidence.

I had lately a short letter from the Duke of Richmond. As the disposition to do something relative to the right of election seems to spread and grow warmer every day, he desires to know from me what your inclinations were with regard to this point. I informed his grace of the substance of your lordship's letter, in the shortest manner I was able; that you were far from adverse to some proceeding, but that you wished it on a plan more limited than that of the Middlesex and London, and confined nearly, if not entirely, to that single interesting point, that you seemed to prefer the method of instruction to that of petition (at least in your own county), but that you had said nothing of a definitive resolution upon that subject in your letter to me. As to the rest, I wrote pretty nearly in substance the same to his grace that I had done to your lordship. Might I presume to suggest, that just at this time he may possibly expect to hear from your lordship, by the first safe conveyance. If the letter be given to his porter, it will be sent by the coach to Goodwood.

I saw a person who may be supposed to talk pretty much the language of the Butes, when I was in town last Wednesday. The ministers are extremely alarmed at the late proceedings in London and Surrey; and not less so at the late advices from America. In this staggering situation, I imagine, they would derive great comfort, and some support, by finding a slur cast upon the mode of petitioning. They have great terror from the circumstance of bringing the discontents of the people directly home to the king. From instructions they have but little apprehension; they are a good deal worn out, and as such are hardly fit to be employed on a business, new, unprecedented, and nationally alarming; and they know besides, I suppose, from experience, that nothing much affects at . . . but what is directly seen and heard; and, in truth, this is the case of most weak and inexperienced people. It is from the fears of the adversary that sometimes one must take a direction for the operations against him. I beg pardon for opening this affair again to your lordship, especially as you have friends near you, among whom it will be discussed to your satisfaction in every particular. Your lordship has seen the Buckinghamshire advertisement. Lord Verney opened the matter to the grand jury by telling them that several respectable gentlemen and freeholders had applied to him to propose a meeting on the judgement in favour of Colonel Luttrell, that he had declined taking it upon him, as member for the county, but that in that capacity he was very willing to *attend* the meeting, and to act in conformity to their determination. There was some, though but a feeble, opposition to the meeting. When it came to the question, eleven were for it, only three against. One was neuter. The sheriff refused to advertise, on which they agreed to do it without him. The meeting is put off until, I think, the twelfth of September or thereabouts. This measure of delay I attribute to the politics of Stowe.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The seat of Richard, second Earl Temple, elder brother of Mr. George Grenville. Grenville, who was

reason assigned is that the freeholders should be able to get their harvest in, and come in greater numbers, and with less inconvenience to the meeting. But the former, I imagine, to be the true reason, unless, perhaps, they may be willing to see what course is taken in Yorkshire before they begin to move.

I got a letter, since I began this, from Charles Townshend (Tommy's brother). He says that Pitt seemed to be in remarkable good humour, on coming out of the closet. I hear, too, that Lord Hertford, whose eldest hope has been for a long time talking opposition language in all companies, has been at Stowe. If this be true, it is probably settled for a family system, which, in my opinion, precludes all possibility of a good event. Had the first offer gone elsewhere, they might have fallen into a plan of yours, with credit to themselves, and possibly with advantage to the public. This could not be the event, either in point of reputation or safety, if under the direction of Lord Chatham, and the lead of the Grenvilles, your lordship and your friends were to make a part of an arrangement. The court alone can profit by any movements of Lord Chatham, and he is always their resource, when they are run hard. I never attempt to write anything like news to your lordship that, when it is done, I do not begin to think myself very foolish, considering my own distant situation, and the lingering method of conveyance. You have all this, undoubtedly, more fully and authentically from others, as well as much earlier. However, I take my chance, and am with the greatest respect and affection,

My dear lord,

Your ever obedient and obliged

humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

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Prime Minister in 1763, was brother-in-law to Lord Chatham, by the latter's marriage with Lady Hester Grenville.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM*Beaconsfield, July 30, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I have had a letter from Mr. Dowdeswell, in which he spoke of being here, or meeting me at some third place, in a few days. He has written something which he wished me to see before its publication. I dare say it will be able and useful. Dr. Blackstone has answered Sir W. Meredith's pamphlet. I have not yet seen it; but it is more hot and bitter, by far, than able and satisfactory, according to the accounts I have had. The spirit of petitioning extends and strengthens. Cornwall, Wilts, and Worcester, have appointed meetings. The ministry move heaven and earth to prevent the progress of this spirit, and in some places they have succeeded. Rigby got it under in Essex. I am told he has made the same efforts, with the same effect, in Norfolk; and he is now gone, with his friend, the provost, to oppose it in Northampton, though that is a county in which I should but little suspect a spirit of that kind, so that his work will probably be easy. I assure your lordship by everything that I can find, that both friends and foes look with very anxious eyes towards Yorkshire. The one very eagerly expecting, the other heartily dreading, some motion of yours. I hear the language of the courtiers is, that your lordship has put a stop to the design of petitioning in your county, and they have commended you for it; but I trust you will not long suffer the disgrace of their praises. Charles Fox called to see me, and I gathered a good deal of the tone they hold from him. He talks of the Bedfords in his old strain of dislike; but the ministry is much more united by the union of the other parties; things grow more distinct; the ministry becomes more formed; and the necessity of firmness and perseverance is every day more evident. I do believe that the Duke of Grafton has got new and stronger assurances than ever of support, and that the court is

fully determined to abide by the plan of the last session. If the humour of petitioning should become anything like general, they must, notwithstanding all their pretended support, union, and firmness, abandon the field with disgrace. They will not dare at least to take any step toward punishing those who have been active in that obnoxious measure. But it is their intention, and it will be in their power, in case the petitioners should be comparatively few, to make an example of terror to all future attempts of expressing the sense of the people, in any other way than by the votes of the House of Commons. I never looked upon this method of petition to the Crown as a thing eligible, but as a matter of urgent and disagreeable necessity. The course of thanking the members for their votes expresses, indeed, a dissatisfaction in the procedure of the House of Commons; but it expresses also a submission to it; but if we mean to get *redress*, we must strengthen the hands of the minority within doors, by the accession of the public opinion, strongly declared to the court, which is the source of the whole mischief. I cannot, for my life, see what can be done very effectual, as long as this parliament and this ministry subsist. I was surprised not to see so much as the thanks of your grand jury to your members in the newspaper. I should have sent it, but that I was not sure, by your not having published it yourselves, that you had not some reason for keeping it back. I should have thought the very purpose of these things to be the most extensive publication.

As to what I was doing myself,<sup>1</sup> I find it more difficult to bring it to the present state of things, than to produce something altogether new. Various matters have so dissipated me, as to hinder me from a vigorous pursuit of this object. I had some notion of casting it into the form of a letter, addressed to a person who had long been in parliament, and is now retired with all his old

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*.

principles and regards still fresh and alive ; I mean old Mr. White.<sup>1</sup> I wish to know whether your lordship likes this ? Whether you do, or do not, you will take no notice of my design. Before I conclude I ought to tell you that Lord Chatham passed by my door on Friday morning, in a jimwhiskee drawn by two horses, one before the other ; he drove himself. His train was two coaches and six, with twenty servants, male and female. He was proceeding with his whole family (Lady Chatham, two sons, and two daughters) to Stowe. He lay at Beaconsfield, was well and cheerful, and walked up and down stairs at the inn without help. I long very much to wait upon your lordship ; but until I have given Dowdeswell a meeting, it will be impossible. I have a fine turtle, at least I am told so. I believe it better to send it to York, to meet your lordship at the races, than to have it directed to Wentworth. Present my humble duty to Lady Rockingham ; her ladyship may now renew her coqueties with Lord Chatham. The equipage that he now drives is quite gay and youthful, and they may begin, as formerly, a negotiation about carriages and horses.

With the greatest affection and attachment,

My dear lord,  
Your ever obedient and obliged  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, September, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD, .

While I wait with some degree of earnestness for the longer letter you proposed to honour me with, permit me to thank you for the short one. It gave me as much satisfaction as I have received from almost any circumstance in my life. I do assure your lordship, that the supposed inaction of Yorkshire was a matter

<sup>1</sup> Probably John White, M.P. for Retford.

of greater pleasure to enemies, and of despair to friends of every sort, than can be well expressed. The well-wishers of the cause now begin to brighten up and to entertain livelier hopes. I send you, enclosed, a letter which I had a little time ago from Whately.<sup>1</sup> He is now with me. On conversation with him, I find it to be true, which indeed I partly suspected, that a long day was fixed for the Buckinghamshire petition, in order to observe what steps were taken in other places ; and to press the business or to relax in the pursuit, according to the spirit in which it should be prosecuted elsewhere, especially within the region of your lordship's influence. But upon seeing the Yorkshire advertisement, they have prepared a number of handbills to be circulated at and after the races, and are resolved, at the same time, not to omit private applications for attendance. They are confident of a numerous and respectable meeting ; though my opinion is, that they have been rather too late and too languid, considering that there are in this county strong and active interests against us. I have seen the draft of the petition. For the substance it is very well ; nothing very poignant in the expression, but nothing faulty that I could find. Some points, besides the great object of the petition, are hinted at ; but there is nothing more than a hint, properly and judiciously enough put, as I apprehend. They have not yet quite settled the plan of the procedure. There is to be a meeting for that purpose to-morrow at the races ; but the present idea is, that Mr. Hampden should move the petition, and that, if it should be carried, the Members of Parliament for the county, and resident in it, should present it to the king. Other gentlemen they did not choose to apply to on this occasion, for fear of creating a jealousy by a preference of one to another. I thought that, by all means, some gentlemen not in Parliament should be added, lest it should look solely like a manœuvre of politicians, and not the genuine sense of the

<sup>1</sup> Probably Thomas Whately, the well-known writer on landscape gardening.

county. It is a loss of which I am very sensible, that the distance makes it impossible for me to have your lordship's advice upon every step of my conduct, but I shall act as nearly upon your general ideas as I can. I perceive that Lord Temple and Mr. Grenville seem prodigiously desirous of my paying them a visit. With regard to the former, I have promised it, in case of my going to Biddlesden, and did not decline it with regard to the latter, but promised nothing. I think they wish to mark in some very public manner, that they are on no ill terms with your lordship ; and I expect, in conformity to that plan, a good deal of attention from Lord Temple at the meeting. I shall avoid going too far, not knowing how all this may end ; and, indeed, because I do not find that your lordship has at all settled how far you intend coalition with them. On this hand, I would not choose a very shy and cold behaviour, for fear of defeating any part of the end for which we met at the Thatched House, or showing anything of disunion, or mutual dislike, in the presence of the common enemy. This kind of behaviour requires a delicacy of management, for which I do not feel myself well qualified, having ever liked a decided situation of friendship or enmity ; but that is not always in my choice. I mentioned to Whately, in confidence, the doubts which prevailed among your lordship's friends, concerning the object to what the petition ought to be directed ; that some of them were of opinion that the application should be made to the House of Commons, and not to the Crown. He told me that Mr. Grenville had originally entertained doubts pretty nearly of the same nature ; but that he is *now* entirely in favour of a petition to the Crown, because that measure being free from any objection merely constitutional, and happening to be that which was first adopted, it would break the unity and firmness of that chain of proceeding in the several counties and towns (upon the preservation of which the whole efficiency of this measure may very probably depend), if we were to vary from the original mode of address ;

that variation, with the departure also from the *latitude* of the original plan, amounting to no less than a condemnation of the whole measure, as far as it has been hitherto pursued. I confess myself entirely of the same opinion. It must be of infinite importance, that the whole stream of the petitions should, as much as possible, run one way. In an affair of this sort, it will, besides, be necessary to be as simple as we can. Every new controversy will embarrass us; and in the meetings which may and ought to follow that of Yorkshire, if that county takes a road of its own, there will be two questions; one on the merits, the other on the mode. They will have two patterns to follow; and the disputes which may arise on the preference of these modes, cannot fail of creating difficulties, which may frustrate the whole design. There is another point, too, which a little affects me. If a petition is prepared to Parliament, it supposes that the other petitions, directly or obliquely calling for a dissolution of Parliament, ought to have an effect; and, after all, what reason is there to believe that the same Parliament which has so haughtily rejected the petition from Middlesex, will listen to one from any other county? If a petition to the Crown be voted, so far you proceed in concert with other places; and it is no inconsistency to add, if that should be thought proper, petitions also to the Houses of Lords and Commons. I find that the people here expect that the other counties in which your lordship's friends have a powerful interest, should follow your pattern with speed and vigour. Lancashire is by no means wholly in the hands of Lord Strange,<sup>1</sup> so as to prevent the exertion of a strong spirit there, as well as in Liverpool and Lancaster; to say nothing of what may be done in the city of York, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Cumberland, Westmoreland, &c., &c. It grows very late, and I must set off for the little meeting at the races early to-morrow. Whately is gone. Your lordship will excuse the blots, the paper, the inaccuracies of every kind. I am just this moment ill-furnished

<sup>1</sup> The eldest son of Edward, eleventh Earl of Derby.

with materials or time for writing. I shall be more explicit on my return. In the meantime I am, with the most real affection and attachment,

My dear lord,  
Your ever obliged and obedient  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, September, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

Our meeting was held yesterday; the ostensible particulars of which Lord Temple took care to transmit immediately to the newspaper. I shall not, therefore, trouble your lordship with them here. Very little pains were taken to form a striking appearance on the day; however, it proved beyond expectation. Aubrey<sup>1</sup> was the only person who seemed to have acted rightly; he came into the town on horseback at the head of sixty-five freeholders. However, when we got into the town hall it was quite full; there were not fewer, I imagine, than four hundred, many of them substantial people, who came forward to the work with a good countenance and an alacrity equal to that of the third regiment of guards.<sup>2</sup> Everything had been done to traverse us; the terrors of the House of Commons were held over many, and the word was: 'The king will despise your petitions, and then what will you do? Will you go into rebellion?' &c., &c. The Tories in general stayed away. O'Brien,<sup>3</sup> in his speech, let fly at the Earl of Bute, and was rather for giving a more Whiggish

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently Sir John Aubrey, at one time Member of Parliament for Wallingford.

<sup>2</sup> Alluding to the employment of the military in St. George's Fields, in the spring of the preceding year.

<sup>3</sup> Probably Murrough O'Brien, Esq., afterwards Earl of Inchiquin; created in 1800, Marquis of Thomond. He died in 1808.

complexion to the meeting, than would be quite prudent in a county where the others were so strong, and in which some of them voted with us, though they did not choose to appear on this occasion. But on the whole he did very well. No Grenville, except George's eldest son,<sup>1</sup> a very sensible boy, and as well disposed to a little faction as any of his family. We were told we should have had Harry Grenville,<sup>2</sup> but Lord Temple found out that he was no freeholder in the county. His lordship, after dinner, made an apology for George's absence, declaring that he highly approved the principles of the meeting, but thought he should be able to defend it with the greater weight if he were not present at it. This was awkward, and awkwardly delivered. At the dinner it was thought necessary that the gentlemen should not dine all together; accordingly, Lord Temple stayed at one house, and Lord Verney and some more of us went to the other. In order to preserve a harmony in our toasts, they sent them to us from the house we had left, where they had been devised. An attempt was made to insinuate a great deal of Grenvilleism into the meeting. However, something was done a little to balance it; and a toast that had been sent down in an improper mode, about Yorkshire, was dressed by Aubrey and O'Brien in somewhat a better manner. What think you of the three united brothers? <sup>3</sup> The freeholders dined, as we did all, at a market-ordinary, for which we paid our shillings. Afterwards wine was given at the expense of Lord V. and Lord T——. The first part was necessary, because the freeholders had been informed that there was to be no treating; and they were to be induced to come by the moderation of the expense. The other was proper to conclude the day cheerfully, and it had a very good effect. I take it the signature

<sup>1</sup> George, afterwards third Earl Temple, and first Marquis of Buckingham.

<sup>2</sup> A brother of Lord Temple.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Chatham, and his brothers by marriage, Lord Temple and Mr. George Grenville.

will be general. Above three hundred signed upon the spot. We have not, I believe, two thousand in the county. . . .

Believe me, with the sincerest and most cordial attachment, my dear lord,

Your ever obedient and obliged  
humble servant;

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, October 9, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

Tommy Townshend called here on his return from a tour to the westward. We had a good deal of indifferent with some political conversation. He talked, as all the world does, of the union of the parties in opposition as a thing very happy and very certain. I threw out a good many doubts of the possibility of a cordial or safe union for us under the direction of the brothers, or of their ever consenting to act with us under any other direction. Each of them had ambition and pretensions enough when they were separate; united, their aims would certainly not be less, and their demands would be higher and more plausible. He did not see these difficulties in so strong a light as I did. I hinted that the brothers, having proclaimed their resolution to act together to the whole world, and in the strongest terms (to say nothing of the other two), we had not the least knowledge of the dispositions of Lord Chatham, or of what he would have pass for his dispositions, with regard to your lordship and your connexion, and that past experience had informed us of nothing but his enmity to your whole system of men and opinions. He has had some conversation with Lord Chatham, but seemed very reserved in delivering an opinion on his sentiments, if, in reality, he has had an opportunity of forming any. Lord Chatham, he

said, took every opportunity of speaking in the highest terms of Sir Chas. Saunders and Admiral Keppel, not only as great men in their profession, but as persons of the greatest honour and integrity. The frequent mention which was made of them, persuaded Townshend that he wished them to take some opportunity of paying him a visit, as it were to congratulate him on the restoration of his health; and that he desired it, with a view of opening himself to them with more fullness and confidence in relation to your party. Townshend being a mutual friend, and having been formerly an internuncio between you, I consider what he said to him as an oblique message. He desired me to communicate these conversations with Lord Chatham; I said I would to your lordship, but not to Keppel and Saunders; but told him that the better way for him would be to call upon you himself, and to talk over the matter, when your lordship should return from Newmarket. Very possibly you have already seen him, and have heard more than I relate. I take Townshend to be a very honest and safe man, and yet, considering his connexion with Lord Chatham, perhaps I opened to him my own political creed with too little reserve; however, I told him that they were only my private sentiments, unauthorized by your lordship or any of the principal persons in your connexion; indeed, they were perhaps more than it would be prudent for any person of weight to deliver to any other than very confidential people just at this moment; and yet I foresee that it will be necessary to declare something like them strongly and openly. But at this minute your lordship has, undoubtedly, a very delicate game to play, in which you cannot disavow this supposed union without giving great advantages to the common enemy; or admit too much of it, without the risk of putting yourself in the power of your allies, on the one hand, or giving them a pretence to charge you with breach of faith, on the other. I beg to put your lordship in mind of little Stuart, in his pursuit of the secretaryship to the arts and commerce. When I showed his

letter to Sir George Savile,<sup>1</sup> at Doncaster, I had no answer. I hope he is not engaged. The Quarmeres are members. If your lordship should desire me to come to London, I have nothing to prevent it. I am, with the greatest truth, my dear lord,

Your ever obliged and obedient  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

1769.

MY DEAR LORD,

I send you a good part of what I have been meditating about the system of the court, and which you were so earnest to see carried into execution.<sup>2</sup> I thought it better to let you see what was finished, rather than to postpone it until the whole was completed. The design appears distinctly enough, from what has been done. If you and your friends approve of it, you will be so good to send it back, with your observations, as soon as possible, that it may go to the press; when I have got through the concluding part, you shall have that also, and on its return, it shall follow the rest.

It will be a matter very proper for the consideration of your lordship and your friends, whether a thing of this nature should appear at all. It is, in the first place, a formal attack upon that object which has been nearest and dearest to the court since the beginning of the reign; and of course, if this thing should be supposed to express your sentiments, must put you on terms irreconcilably bad with the court and every one of its adherents. I foresee, at the same time, that the other bodies who compose the opposition, will desire 'not to be comprehended in these declarations',

<sup>1</sup> Member for Yorkshire, and a distinguished supporter of the Rockingham party.

<sup>2</sup> The pamphlet published in the next year under the title of *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*.

as G. G. said, upon such an occasion. two years ago, so that you irritate, past forgiveness, the court party, and you do not conciliate all the opposition. Besides, I am very far from confident, that the doctrines avowed in this piece (though as clear to me as first principles) will be considered as well founded, or that they will be at all popular. If so, we lose upon every side.

As to myself, I am indifferent about the event. Only, for my credit, (as I fear from some particular opinions, and from this extensive previous communication, I shall be considered as the author,) I wish, that if our friends approve the design, I may have some tolerable support in Parliament, from the innumerable attacks it will bring upon me. If this be successful with the public, I shall have enough of odium ; I could wish it a little divided, if the sentiments should belong to others as well as to myself ; for it is upon this presumption, and with this view only, that I mean to publish. In order that it should be truly the common cause, make it at your meeting what you please. Let me know what ought to be left out, what softened, and what strengthened. On reading it to Will. and Dick, they thought some things a little too ludicrous. I thought much otherwise, for I could rather wish that more had occurred to me (as more would, had my spirits been high), for I know how ill a long detail of politics, not animated by a direct controversy, wants every kind of help to make it tolerable.

The whole is, in a manner, new cast, something to the prejudice of the order, which, if I can, I will rectify, though I fear this will be difficult. The former scheme would no ways answer, and I wish I had entirely thrown it aside, as it has embarrassed me a good deal. The whole attack on Pitt's conduct must be omitted, or we shall draw the cry of the world upon us, as if we meant directly to quarrel with all mankind.

My brother <sup>1</sup> is ordered to Grenada, though his leg

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Richard Burke.

is not yet in a condition, as his surgeons tell him, and as he feels, to conflict with that climate. If he goes, he goes I fear to death ; if he stays, he loses his place, with the mortifying circumstance of accommodating an enemy. This is not pleasant to me.

You will present my compliments to your company, with whom, though absent, I am present in spirit ; I am, to them and to your lordship, what ever I ought to be, most sincerely and affectionately your attached and obedient humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

I forgot to mention an application to me from a Mr. Tyson on the part of a Mr. Mackinnon, a gentleman of Antigua, of considerable fortune, who lives at Southampton. He has some notion of attacking the members there, and has sent this Mr. Tyson to declare his attachment to your lordship's interests in politics. As I must understand his intention, I told him that your lordship's friends had resolved, as a general maxim, on not promising an election support, in a parliamentary character, to any person directly or indirectly ; this, as strong as I could. I have since been desired to know what your lordship's answer is. May I venture, from you, to repeat what I told him, as a general principle of the party ?

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, Sunday, October 29, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I am infinitely obliged to your lordship for your long and satisfactory letter, which I concealed or communicated in the manner I thought most agreeable to your wishes. I found Lord Albemarle had not received the copy your lordship intended for him ; I therefore showed him mine, and let Mason make a copy of it for Keppel and Saunders, when they should come to town. I showed it, besides, to Lord J.

Cavendish and Lord Frederick. They all concurred very nearly in sentiment with your lordship, upon every particular. There was some doubt, whether our two friends ought not to pay the visit which, it seems, is desired, in order to hear at least what style he<sup>1</sup> uses, and what sentiments he would be believed to entertain ; but they will do nothing without your desire. For my own part, the more I think of it, the more perfectly I am convinced that we ought to take no sort of notice of him, but to proceed exactly as if no such man existed in the world. For though, according to Lord Camden's phrase, Lord Chatham has had a wonderful resurrection to health, his resurrection to credit and consequence, and to the power of doing mischief (without which last his resurrection will be incomplete), must be owing to your lordship and your friends. It ought never to be forgotten, how much the late Duke of Newcastle hurt himself, in his interest very often, in his reputation almost always, by his itch of negotiation. If Lord C. has anything to communicate to these gentlemen, he may send for them. This union of the three brothers will distract the country as much in future as their dissensions did formerly. I quite agree with your lordship, that Grenville is the most temperate and manageable of the three ; but he is no longer George Grenville, a disengaged individual, but one of the triumvirate, to whom, by the way, he brings all the following that they possess. Nothing can be said of him, but what can be said, with equal truth, of the other two, from whom, I really believe, he will never disconnect himself. All these considerations make me wish, as ardently as your lordship's partiality can do, that my little scheme was in a way of being speedily completed. I see, I feel, the necessity of justifying to our friends and to the world, the refusal, which is inevitable, of what will be thought very advantageous offers. This can only be done by showing the ground upon which the party stands, and how different its constitution, as well as the persons

<sup>1</sup> Lord Chatham.

who compose it, are from the Bedfords, and Grenvilles, and other knots, who are combined for no public purpose, but only as a means of furthering, with joint strength, their private and individual advantage. I am afraid I shall never compass this design to my mind. Hitherto I have been so variously distracted, that I have made but little progress, indeed none; but to-day I began to set to work a little seriously. But, in order to produce something which, by being timely, may be useful, I must beg to be excused from going to Yorkshire in the next month. This would break me to pieces, and I think I may do more service here. Perhaps I may be able to send something for your consideration at that meeting.

Your lordship's conversation with the king's friend was curious. I can be at no loss for the person. I am told he talks very loud opposition; but let him, or the rest of his corps, talk what language they will, it will, translated into plain English, signify nothing but a repetition of the old system; nor can it be thought that by sending for Lord Chatham, they mean anything else than to patch a shred or two, of one or more of the other parties, upon the old Bute garment, since their last piecing is worn out. If they had been dissatisfied with the last botching of Lord Chatham, they would not have thought again of the same workman. Perhaps, for that reason (if anything of the kind is worth a second thought), it might be as well not to suggest anything of our dislike of that person to any one of the sacred band: as their opinion of our disunion will rather fortify the court in its resolution of employing him in the formation of another of their expedient administrations. Indeed, as far as I can guess at their designs, by the discourses of last winter, or the beginning of summer (for lately I have heard nothing), they had no one point at heart but the perpetual exclusion of your lordship, and your whole system. Therefore, any look towards courts or courtiers, their liking or their displeasure, can be no plan for us. I am infinitely pleased with the resolution

in Derbyshire ; not so much for the addition of the voice of that county, but as its silence would, and indeed did, look like a renunciation of the conduct held in other places. I have no kind of doubt of a sufficient majority in Lancashire against all the interest and all the efforts of Lord Strange. The difficulty will be in the *calling* of the meeting : but I should think that half a dozen principal gentlemen would be sufficient ; and the trading and manufacturing towns would do the rest. Besides, I take it for granted, that our friends, Sir F. Standish and Sir Peter Lyster, would exert themselves. I see, by the paper, that something is likely to be stirred in Lincolnshire. Your lordship, no doubt, recollects how necessary the co-operation of Lord Scarborough and Lord Monson will be, to the success of a petition there. Nothing, as yet, of Nottingham ; Cumberland likewise sleeps. Is it not most certain, that the latter county might be easily brought into a petition on the Duke of Portland's giving it his countenance ?

Since I began this letter, which was two or three days ago, I have done something, not wholly to displease myself, in the beginning of the pamphlet. It was necessary to change it wholly from the manner in which you saw it ; and I think the change has not been for the worse. Unluckily, I am broke off from it for about a week. Lord Verney seems a little hurt that I have not been to see him. I shall go to him to-morrow, and stay till Saturday. While I am there, I propose to pay a visit at Stowe. Not coming directly from Yorkshire, it will have no appearance of a political advance : and not shunning the visit, will not look as if a hostile air was meant to be preserved, if the conversation should veer, as it must, towards politics. This is the line I intend to preserve to the best of my power. There has been much talk of the chancellor<sup>1</sup> ; his opinions, dispositions, going out, or staying in ; but for my part, I look upon it all in the usual strain, of distressing the ministers into some bargain advan-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Camden.

tageous to him ; or in the style of Lord Chatham's politics, to keep hovering in air, over all parties, and to souse down where the prey may prove best. It is thought Wilmot<sup>1</sup> will be chosen to succeed him, if they cannot make up matters among themselves ; and I think they have it in their power to make it worth his while to accept. I long to hear how they go on in Ireland, and imagine I shall soon have a good account : if I should learn anything satisfactory, your lordship shall have it in a short time. Stuart will, I hope, succeed in his little pursuit. He has been a great attender on that society ; but if he had never set his foot within their doors, he has but too much abilities for their paltry business. I heard, accidentally, a report which gave me much concern, of your lordship being ill, and confined to your bed ; but being informed it was nothing more than a boil, and knowing what good effects such eruptions have on your health, I was at length rather pleased. I beg leave to present my respects to Lady Rockingham. Believe me, my dear lord, with the greatest truth and affection,

Your ever obedient and obliged humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

I have just received George Grenville's speech, which I send to your lordship. It is not yet published.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Beaconsfield, November 6, 1769.*

MY DEAR LORD,

Will. Burke and I spent the best part of last week with Lord Verney, and in a manner much to our satisfaction. We paid a morning visit to Stowe, where we found Lord Temple alone. We passed about three hours in the gardens. I was prepared to find them grand and extensive, but insipid ; however, it turned

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Eardley Wilmot, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

out otherwise. I thought many parts very interesting, and the whole as well managed as one could expect, from grounds which had been improved upon two very different ideas ; and where the revolution of taste had signalized itself upon the same objects. Be they what they may, it was impossible that the gardens or gardening should engross us entirely during our walk. We had a great deal of political conversation. He was in good humour, and his manner was fair and open. Without seeming offended, the turn of his discourse indicated at times that he had heard of your lordship, and your friends, expressing a disrelish to their junto, though he did not speak out upon it so clearly, as to make me quite satisfied that this was his meaning. He said that as we had got to see one another, and to act together, he hoped there would be no retrospect, no charge, and no recrimination. That we had done each other a thousand acts of unkindness ; let us make amends by a thousand acts of friendship. He was of opinion that, let what would happen, the great point for us, and the country, would be, to get rid of the present administration, which could only be effected by the appearance of union and confidence. He said, and he repeated it, that, to be sure, there was no treaty, expressed or implied, to bind the parties in honour to one another, or to any measure, except the establishment of the rights of the freeholders. In everything else, we were both free : ‘ we were both free to play the fool as much as we pleased, mark that.’ He said these last words with a good deal of emphasis. Lord Chatham, he told us, was exceedingly animated against the Ministry. He was uneasy that the meeting of Parliament was postponed ; lest a fit of the gout should intervene, though no moderate fit should keep him from the House of Peers on the first day of the session. His opinion is, that the affair of the Middlesex election should be taken up in that house, as well as the House of Commons. I can draw no certain inference from the last part of our discourse with Lord Temple, as it was rather in a matter of general specula-

tion, than the business of the day. We talked of the court system, and their scheme of having dependent administrations. I spoke of this as the reigning evil ; and particularly mentioned the favourite idea, of a king's making a separate party for himself. He said this latter did not seem so bad a thing, if Lord Bute had not spoiled it. I said I thought it was mischievous, whether Lord Bute had a hand in it or not, and equally so. He contented himself with repeating his observation, as I did by repeating mine, and we said no more upon this subject. On the whole, I was glad to find that we understood one another thoroughly, on the nature and extent of our coalition ; which once being mutually explained, will not render it necessary to say anything upon it publicly, so as to give an advantage against us to the common enemy. I forgot to mention anything to your lordship on the revolution in the India House. Indeed, I do not wonder that I should, the misfortunes which my friends have met with there, make it a subject on which I do not like to turn my thoughts. Sullivan has gone over to the court. When I was told this, I said to my informer, as I do to your lordship, that I could not blame him. His consequence in the India House is much more material to him than his rank in Parliament ; and as the whole opposition, in a manner, disclaimed and persecuted him, what tie bound him from disclaiming them, and looking for support wherever he could find it ? How he has arranged with Lord Shelburne, with whom he was generally supposed in connexion, I know not ; but nobody else had any claim upon him. Neither Lord Clive's conduct in the Grenville administration, nor the attachment he has chosen since, put him one bit higher with me ; indeed, he has not so much to be said in his favour. As to Sir George Colebrooke, he is just what I always thought him. He has shown himself even an enemy to poor Thibot Bourke ; but in the present circumstances, his conduct is natural to people of his constitution, and we must submit to it. I turn rather to a better subject, which this brings to my mind.

It is Dempster's conduct on the occasion. He thought, as I do, about Sullivan's coalition. He told him that it should make no difference in his line in the India House; that there he would as firmly stand by him, as he would continue to oppose his new friends in Parliament; that his political connexion was with your lordship only, and would always be so, but that if Mr. Sullivan should find that course of conduct prejudicial to his interests in Leadenhall Street, that he would, at an hour's notice, disqualify for the directorship. This was what I expected from Dempster, in an affair like this; not to sacrifice one duty to another, but to keep both if possible, if not, to put it out of his power to violate the principal.

When I got home I returned to my business, which I did not quite neglect whilst I was at Lord Verney's. I find I must either speak very broad, or weaken the matter, and render it vulgar and ineffectual. I find some difficulties as I proceed; for what appear to me self-evident propositions, the conduct and pretences of people oblige one formally to prove; and this seems to me, and to others, a dull and needless labour. However, a good deal of it will be soon ready, and you may dispose of it as you please. It will, I am afraid, be long. On my coming home I found, by woful experience, that one of the news-printers has got a country-house at Beaconsfield. The old man that milks my cows and the old dairy-maid had married, and he has made a flaming paragraph of it. I suppose I shall be the subject of news enough, if this be the case. But I have sent a formal message, to beg myself off in the particular of my family here. I do not hear a word of news worth your notice. The speech I enclosed to you in my last <sup>1</sup> is to be the subject of some animadversions from Wilkes. This, I am told, is a half-secret. I am sorry, just now, that he should abuse him; for if it be well done, the ministry will triumph; if ill, Wilkes will lower himself, which will please them no less; besides, it may be thought that

<sup>1</sup> A printed speech of Mr. George Grenville.

he is encouraged by me, or some of your lordship's friends. Will. takes this to town, whither he goes to correct the sheets of Dowdeswell's pamphlet. I have, I believe, tired you ; and so shall take my leave, by assuring you that I am, with the most cordial attachment,

My dear lord,  
Your ever obliged and obedient  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

I hope the Lord Cavendishes have taken care to secure a full meeting at Derby. It will be very awkward if they should have neglected this essential step. Dowdeswell has desired me to go to Yorkshire with him on the 13th. I foresee, that if I do, this business of mine will come to nothing, so I think I must decline it, for I really think something of the sort wanting ; besides, we are to present the petition on Friday se'nnight. Your lordship will be so good as to present Mrs. Burke's and my respects to Lady Rockingham.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*August 15, 1770.*

MY DEAR SHACKLETON,

My wife has had a very long illness ; it was a slow fever, with frequent appearances of amendment and frequent relapses. She was confined to her bed for above two months, and reduced in strength and in flesh beyond anything that can be imagined. But, I thank God, she is now up again, in good spirits, and getting forward in strength as fast as can be expected from the miserable lowness into which she was fallen. As to poor Richard, he is, I hope, by this safe in Grenada. His health was not very good, and the strength of his broken leg by no means thoroughly restored at his departure. But he was to look for no favour or indulgence from our present rulers, who even attempted to take his employment from him ; but in

this lesser, as in many greater instances of their malignity, they defeated their own purpose by the bungling method of the execution; and from shame, they found themselves obliged to restore him to his office, but under strict orders for departure, notwithstanding the testimony of the king's surgeon concerning the state of his leg. I think we may hear from him about the end of this month or early in the next. He goes into a bad climate, among worthless and disagreeable people; but I hope the goodness of Providence, in his favour, is not yet exhausted. However he may partake of my own inattention in writing, I do assure you he never failed to remember you with the sincerest affection. I am glad that you find some entertainment in the '*Thoughts*'. They have had, in general (I flatter myself), the approbation of the most thinking part of the people, and the courtiers admit that the hostility has not been illiberal. The party which is most displeased, is a rotten subdivision of a faction amongst ourselves, who have done us infinite mischief by the violence, rashness, and often wickedness of their measures. I mean the Bill-of-Rights people;<sup>1</sup> but who have thought proper at length to do us, I hope, a service, by declaring open war upon all our connexion. Mrs. Macaulay's performance was what I expected; there are, however, none of that set who can do better; the Amazon is the greatest champion among them. Mrs. Shackleton is very stout in daring to encounter her; but she would find herself unequal, for no heroine in Billingsgate can go beyond the patriotic scolding of our republican virago. You see I have been afraid to answer her. As to our affairs, they remain as they have been; the people, in general, dissatisfied; the Government feeble, hated, and insulted: but a dread of pushing things to a dangerous extreme, while we are seeking for a remedy

<sup>1</sup> The society styled 'Supporters of the Bill of Rights' was established in February, 1769, by Wilkes, Sergeant Glynn, Alderman Sawbridge, and other persons, for the most part connected with the city of London.

to distempers which all confess, brings many to the support, and most to a sort of ill-humoured acquiescence, in the present court scheme of administration. As to our friends, we continue our old ground ; a good harmony subsists, at least in appearance, between the capital members of opposition. Lord Chatham behaved handsomely in rejecting the idea of a triennial Parliament, which the jury of London, at the instigation of the Bill-of-Rights men, thought proper to fasten upon him in order to slur us, and to get some name of consequence to patronize their madness. I suppose you have seen his answer in the papers. Indeed, the idea of short parliaments is, I confess, plausible enough ; so is the idea of an election by ballot ; but I believe neither will stand their ground when entered into minutely, and with a reference to actually existing circumstances. If no remedy can be found in the dispositions of capital people, in the temper, spirit (and docility too) of the lower, and in the thorough union of both, nothing can be done by any alterations in forms. Indeed, all that wise men even aim at is to keep things from coming to the worst. Those who expect perfect reformatations, either deceive or are deceived miserably. Adieu, dear Shackleton. Remember Mrs. Burke, and all of us, with much regard to your wife and your father ; and believe me,

Most faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Gregories, September 8, 1770.*

MY DEAR LORD,

Yesterday Mr. Bullock was elected, without opposition, for Wendover. Mr. Collins left the place early that morning without standing the poll ; after having made fruitless efforts for some days before. By this feeble attempt, I hope the borough is more and more confirmed to Lord Verney ; and a few common

arrangements will, I trust, be sufficient to keep it so. I wish your lordship joy of another friend in Parliament. The event of this election has removed no small burden from my mind.

I have been informed by the *St. James's Chronicle*, that the gentlemen of Yorkshire are determined upon a meeting. The advertisement is signed respectably. The circumstance of the sheriff's refusal to concur, seems rather fortunate. It gives an opportunity to show how strongly the sense of the weightiest people of the county inclined against the court doctrine of election and reprobation. I make no doubt that your plan will be judiciously settled, and spiritedly pursued. If no step at all had been taken during the summer, I should be apprehensive that such a stagnation would have been little less than fatal to the cause. The people were very much and very generally touched with the question on Middlesex. They feel upon this, but upon no other ground of our opposition. We never have had, and we never shall have, a matter every way so well calculated to engage them, and if the spirit which was excited upon this occasion were suffered to flatten and evaporate, you would find it difficult to collect it again, when you might have the greatest occasion for it. Opposition is upon narrow and delicate ground, especially that part of opposition which acts with your lordship; you and your friends having exceedingly contracted the field of operation upon principles of delicacy, which will in the end be found wise, as well as honourable. However, the scantiness of the ground makes it the more necessary to cultivate it with vigour and diligence, else the rule of *exiguum colito* will neither be good farming, nor good politics.

I do not take the liberty of throwing out these hints, from any opinion that it is necessary to use extraordinary means to keep the spirit alive in Yorkshire, but from a strong conviction of the propriety at least of extending it to other places, and among other interests, who have hitherto acted with you in this point. People will be apt to attribute a want of com-

munication to one of these two causes ; either that the business was undertaken in Yorkshire, and carried contrary to your lordship's wishes, or that your confidence is entirely alienated from your political confederates. The former, I take it for granted, cannot be true, and if it were, cannot in policy be assigned as the ground of your reserve. The latter, when you have no complaint to make of the other parts of opposition, might be considered as a style of proceeding less fair than has been usual with your lordship, and would give them the more colourable pretence of complaint, as it is known that the first proposal for a coalition in this business came from your lordship through Mr. Dowdeswell ; and however you might be supposed free to show what reserve or confidence you pleased upon other matters, they would think that they had little less than an actual right to expect communication in all steps relative to the Middlesex decision. If it should be thought proper that other parts should follow the example of Yorkshire, this communication would become the more necessary, that time and means might be furnished for proper dispositions. If your lordship should think it right to let the matter rest upon the Yorkshire proceeding, people may be desirous of knowing the grounds upon which it went so far, and yet was to be carried no further. I am informed that the idea entertained in Yorkshire is, that of an instruction to the county members. To me it appears that every objection which lay to that method last year exists, with at least equal power, in the present. I say this on a supposition that I have a right idea of the plan of the instructions. A motion to be made in Parliament for censuring those who advised the king not to listen to complaints against that identical Parliament itself ! What arguments could be used in support of such a motion ? It really appears to me with a very unparliamentary air. If indeed the members should be instructed to move a Bill for rescinding that obnoxious judgement, and providing in future for the right of election, and if such a Bill

should not be carried, to decline a further attendance on Parliament, this would have a more practicable aspect, in the former part of it, and some appearance of spirit and energy in the latter. The other plan could only appear intended for the purpose of a day's angry debate, and that, in my humble opinion, but upon very indifferent ground. I have gone further than I intended in a matter, in which I am but indirectly concerned, and of which I am but an indifferent judge; but your lordship has often, with great goodness, borne the imprudent officiousness of my zeal. Just as I had written thus far, your lordship's messenger brought me your very obliging letter, which gave me some insight into matters on which I was a good deal in the dark. If it were a certain thing, that a concurrence would be had among gentlemen to retire from Parliament, and to take the sense of their counties upon the subject of that rash ministerial boasting (which your lordship very judiciously takes it for granted would be used), to be sure, your plan would revive, much more effectually than that of your friends in Yorkshire, the spirit which, for some time past, seems to have been decaying in every part of the kingdom. But the doubt is, whether the precedent languor would not have communicated itself from the county to the Parliament, and to every member of it; I mean to those county members, or to most of those, who act in your system. Possibly what is done in Yorkshire may, when objected to as a *partial movement*, be still a method of bringing things about in a manner agreeable to your lordship's original ideas.

Lord Temple was not at the races—Lady Temple had been taken ill in Dorsetshire. I did not go to these races. I saw Aubrey, who very civilly came to us at our election at Wendover. He told me that Lord Temple rather thought a meeting unadvisable; but that he would take a hearty part in promoting one, provided Lord Verney and we were of a different opinion. I wished Aubrey to inform Lord Temple, that in a business of so much delicacy, and where such

a variety of interests were concerned, no step ought to be taken from complaisance to anybody, but from a full and unanimous sense of the prudence and expediency of the measure. Lord Verney agreed to this, though he is much for stirring something. I just saw Charles Lowndes at the same place, who likewise came with the same kind intentions. He is a right man, and, I make no doubt, much yours.

I have seen but few people this summer. Among those few, were some of the courtiers. The court is fully resolved to adhere to its present system; but that if, contrary to their expectation, it should be found impossible to go on with the present instruments, they will send to Lord Chatham, not to your lordship or the Grenvilles. They are well acquainted with the difference between the Bill of Rights and your lordship's friends, and they are very insolently rejoiced at it. They respect and fear that wretched knot beyond anything you can readily imagine, and far more than any part, or than all the other parts of the opposition. The reason is plain: there is a vast resemblance of character between them. They feel that, if they had equal spirit and industry, they would, in the same situation, act the very same part. It is their idea of a perfect opposition. Will. Burke has seen Lord John Cavendish in town. His lordship is of opinion that some further explanation of the common sentiments of the party would be advisable. Perhaps it may; but I must talk a great deal to you, as well as to him, before I attempt it. It is a business of great delicacy—of infinite delicacy. It is not here a matter of account and calculation—not of a custom-house, and treasury, and counting-house; but a *talk* of liberty and popularity, in which nonsense will always double-distance the utmost speed of experience and reason. How well these villains deserve the gallows for their playing the court-game against us at this season! I had a short note from the Duke of Manchester; Lord Mayor wishes to see me. I take it for granted, it is to know whether you would have anything done in the city. I must beg

some immediate advice from your lordship. The great difficulty will be, to prevent the traitors from bringing in speculative questions to supplant our business. I wish, for the moment, what I never wished before—that I was a freeman of London.

I will write to Dowdeswell; and, if possible, I will be with your lordship at the time you mention. Will. Burke has seen Fitzherbert, who tells him that Parliament will not meet in November. Charles Fox thinks it will. Which is the best authority? I am sorry to hear of the very variable state of Lady Rockingham's health. I hope the settled autumn which seems coming on will be of service to her. Mrs. Burke is coming on tolerably in strength, considering the length and heaviness of her disorder.

I forgot to mention that Lord Chatham has been three days at George Grenville's. He went through Wendover, on his return, the day of election. Be so good as to present Mrs. Burke's, and my humble duty, to Lady Rockingham. Believe me to be, with the greatest truth and attachment, my dear lord,

Your lordship's most affectionate and obliged  
humble servant,  
• EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Beaconsfield, September 23, 1770.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I despair of being able to wait upon you this summer in Yorkshire. I believe that, just now, the attempt would be to little purpose. I take it for granted that you will be at Newmarket very shortly. If, in the interval between the meetings, your lordship should come to town, or should wish me to go to Newmarket, or to meet you at your house in Northamptonshire, the ride to the furthest of these places is not very long. I propose to set out on a tour which will carry me towards Mr. Dowdeswell's. If your lordship would have a con-

*cihabulum*, he would, I dare say, be ready to make one at your place of appointment. I saw the lord mayor a day or two ago. He seemed strongly convinced of the necessity of doing something to remove the ill impressions which were made by the unfortunate candour of one ill-timed speech. He is certainly a man of strong principle and of good natural sense, but his experience in the world is but moderate. There was a fine opportunity lost (the finest in the world) of taking the city out of the worst hands in the world, and of putting it into good ones. I suppose the Duke of Manchester has given you a full account of our first conversation, so that I shall only trouble your lordship with the substance of the last. He had not seen Lord Chatham; but he is determined to speak to him before he calls any meeting of the common council or the livery. This is certainly right; and I think he is equally right in the style in which he proposes to speak upon the subject. Though he has not seen Lord Chatham, he could easily guess by a conversation he had had with Sawbridge, how Lord C. is disposed. His lordship is earnest that something should be undertaken, but not until the proceedings in Yorkshire are known. It agrees with our idea of taking up the two points of the right of election, and the bringing evil counsellors to justice; but would have something added concerning verdicts and juries. This is, I dare say, by far the most favourite point with Lord Chatham; partly from political views, and partly from his personal animosity to Lord Mansfield. But as the gratification of this animosity and the compassing of those political purposes, are much more his affair than your lordship's, I did all in my power to possess our friend with the absolute necessity of declining to engage in any matter of law, however specious, until we should have an opportunity of consulting those of the profession who act with your lordship. I said that the matter was of so much weight, and those gentlemen of that consequence and character, that it would neither be dignified in the party, nor respectful to your law friends, to

engage rashly, and without consultation. in points of such delicacy ; especially as it was the characteristic of your lordship and your friends, never to take up anything as a grievance when you did not mean in good earnest to have it reformed. He came into these ideas very fully. With regard to the instruction, he says, that he finds it objected to as a feeble and languid measure, preposterously succeeding others of infinitely greater vigour. To be sure, this is one of the obvious evil effects of the violence and precipitation, to call them by no worse names, of some of our late allies, who destroyed the series of all regular operation by beginning with the extremes. However, so the fact is ; languor following this violence will be as irregular and as ill-timed as the violence itself, and would be, to all appearance, as injudicious, with less excuse from fervency of spirit. The solution which he proposed was, to add to the first instruction concerning the right of election, a desire that in case the House should persevere in refusing to satisfy the electors upon that subject, their members might discontinue their attendance in Parliament. Not knowing your lordship's intentions, I did not undertake to propose that measure ; at the same time, as it coincided entirely with my invariable opinion, confirmed by everything that happens, I could by no means think of opposing it. I suppose your lordship has heard that the 'Society of the Bill of Rights' is hastening to its dissolution : *sit illi terra levis*. I say nothing, because I hear nothing certain of the cause of their violent warlike preparations.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of all this tempest the ministers, I am told, seem much at their ease ; they are much out of town, and everything goes on in a vast hurry without any method or arrangement. Why they have taken these steps, I know not ; but I am strongly of opinion, that they do not portend a war, at least, unless the report be true, that a French squadron has sailed into the Archipelago. I have lately read a good part, not the whole, of a

<sup>1</sup> Occasioned by the dispute with Spain, on the subject of Falkland's Islands.

pamphlet on the late verdicts. It is called 'a Letter to Almon'. They give it to Lord Camden. If it be his, I think his rancour far outran his judgement. Though there are good hits in it, and some part, as I imagine, very sound doctrine, he would certainly have answered his purpose much better if he had shown less malevolence and personal enmity in the cause. Has your lordship yet seen it? I wait with impatience the result of the Yorkshire meeting. I hope my Lady Rockingham's health is restored, and that your lordship's continues. All here are well, thank God! With great truth and attachment, I am, my dear lord,

Your ever obedient and obliged friend and  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO ARTHUR YOUNG, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

*Beaconsfield, October 21, 1770.*

SIR,

I am sure you will have the goodness to excuse the trouble I am going to give you; and to which your knowledge and your communicative character must necessarily make you subject.

When I had the pleasure of seeing you last year, I told you that I had sown about an acre of carrots for a trial. My soil is gravelly-loam, tolerably deep, but, in some places, a little stiff. As the seed was sown late, the ground not very well prepared, and the year in general, I am told, not favourable to that vegetable, my crop was but indifferent. So far with regard to the husbandry of that article: with regard to the economy, the success was worse. I attempted to fatten two middle-sized bacon-hogs with carrots; after having been two months, or near the matter, in the sty, I found, that as they were young, they had grown pretty considerably, but continued as lean as when I put them up. I was obliged to have recourse to barley-meal, and in a short time they became as fat as I could

<sup>1</sup> The celebrated agriculturist.

wish, though, to all appearance, no way helped by the previous use of carrots.

He is but a poor husbandman, who is discouraged by one year's ill-success, where he acts upon good authority or pursues a rational principle. Last spring, I sowed two acres with the same seed. The ground had received a year's fallow, one good trench-ploughing, and two or three turnings, in the common way; it was dunged early in the winter, so that the earth was pretty well pulverized, and the dung thoroughly rotted and mixed, by the spring. In the summer they were twice hand-hoed, I fear not sufficiently, but the crop is very large, and the carrots, though not so sightly as the sand carrots, full as rich in colour, or, indeed, rather higher and finer; a most aromatic smell, firm, and admirably tasted. I have sent two wagon-loads to London, for which I had six pounds, fifteen. The back-carriage of coal-ashes has paid my charges. I take it that the crop is, notwithstanding the many and heavy expenses attending it, better than a crop of wheat, according to the usual product of this part of the country. So far I am satisfied. Now comes the domestic use. Somewhat more than a fortnight ago, I put up two porkers of the Kensington breed. They have not made the smallest progress on the boiled carrots, with which they have been fed very plentifully. Last year, the bailiff attributed the failure to the carrots having been over-boiled; this year they have been boiled less; hitherto the event has been the same. The price of barley and peas is this year so high, that I should wish to persevere, if there was the least chance for succeeding; as I have a very great quantity of carrots, and the London market will take off only those which have a handsome appearance. Now, Sir, let me beg that you will be so obliging as to point out what degree of boiling the carrots ought to have, or where you may suspect that my error lies. The year is so far advanced, that I scarce dare to beg the favour of seeing you here. I have had a very uneasy summer, from a long illness of Mrs. Burke, or I should have

endeavoured at that honour before. Once more I request your pardon for this trouble; and am, with great truth and esteem, Sir,

Your most obliged and obedient humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

I am to tell you, that whilst I failed in fattening by carrots, I have this year killed one fine porker of 20 lb. the quarter, and two of sixteen each. From barley-meal, each fattened perfectly, in little more than three weeks.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO CHARLES TOWNSEND, ESQ.

*October 17, 1771.*

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for the kind part you have taken, on the report of our friend Fitzherbert's conversation about the author of Junius. You have done it in a manner that is just to me, and delicate to both of us. I am indeed extremely ready to believe, that he has had no share in circulating an opinion so very injurious to me, as that I am capable of treating the character of my friends, and even my own character, with levity, in order to be able to attack that of others with the less suspicion. When I have anything to object to persons in power, they know very well, that I use no sort of managements towards them, except those which every honest man owes to his own dignity. If I thought it necessary to bring the same charges against them into a more public discussion than that of the House of Commons, I should use exactly the same freedom, making myself, in the same manner, liable to all the consequences. You observe very rightly, that no fair man can believe me to be the author of Junius. Such a supposition might tend, indeed, to raise the estimation of my powers of writing above their just value. Not one of my friends does, upon that flattering principle, give me for the writer; and when my enemies endeavour to fix Junius upon me, it is not for the sake of giving me the credit of an

able performance. My friends I have satisfied ;—my enemies shall never have any direct satisfaction from me. The Ministry, I am told, are convinced of my having written Junius, on the authority of a miserable bookseller's preface, which I have read since I saw you, in which there are not three lines of common truth or sense, and which defames me, if possible, with more falsehood and malignity, than the libellers whom they pay for that worthy purpose. This argument of theirs only serves to show how much their malice is superior to their discernment. For some years, and almost daily, they have been abusing me in the public papers ; and (among other pretences for their scurrility) as being the author of the letters in question. I have never once condescended to take the least notice of their invectives, or publicly to deny the fact upon which some of them were grounded. At the same time, to you, or to any of my friends, I have been as ready as I ought to be, in disclaiming in the most precise terms, writings, that are as superior perhaps to my talents, as they are most certainly different in many essential points from my regards and my principles. I am, with the greatest truth and affection,

My dear Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

I only wait my brother's arrival to pay my visit to Frognall.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE BISHOP OF  
CHESTER <sup>1</sup>

*Fludyer Street, November 9, 1771.*

MY DEAR LORD,

You will have the goodness to excuse this second trouble, on the disagreeable subject of our last Thursday's conversation. The discourse naturally spread out into great extent and variety, with regard both to

<sup>1</sup> Dr. William Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York.

things and persons. This may tend to embarrass the single point I had in view, and the single light in which I desire it may be considered. I spoke of the many stories I had heard; but as it is possible that their authority may be disputed, I give no great attention to them, and rather request that no sort of mention may be made of them. If your lordship should choose to speak to Lord Mansfield, I wish you would inform him, that though I perfectly despise the attempt of the court writers to fix upon me performances to which I am a stranger, as a colour for the infamous abuse they throw upon me so systematically; yet, that I do find myself extremely hurt in perceiving that his lordship has not thought proper to discountenance the blending a vindication of his character with the most scurrilous attacks upon mine; and that he has permitted the first regular defence that I have ever seen made for him to be addressed to me, without the least proof, presumption, or ground, for the slightest suspicion that I had any share whatsoever in that controversy.

I am not such a child as to suffer myself to be persuaded that the writers of these papers are not in the pay of the Treasury; I cannot conceive it possible that Lord Mansfield can be ignorant of the existence of such papers. I cannot believe that he does not know they are written in a style injurious to me. The public does certainly think that, being written by persons apparently zealous for his honour, they are not disagreeable to him. There is no man who can doubt that the slightest intimation from his lordship, that such a mode of defence was displeasing to him, would long since have put a stop to the impudent licence of the instruments of administration.

It may be magnanimity in Lord Mansfield to despise attacks made upon himself; but I cannot conceive it essential to that character for his lordship to suffer his vindication to be converted into a vehicle of scandal upon a person who has hitherto been, at least, not his enemy.

I beg to be understood, that I do not speak as being in the least affected by the *general* hostility of the

writers of these papers, or their employers, which I hope I have in some degree merited, and which I wish them to continue, as some sort of proof that I have not been inactive in the performance of my duty.

I am, with the, &c.,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO CHARLES TOWNSHEND, ESQ.

*November 24, 1771.*

DEAR SIR,

I received your letter at the proper time, but delayed my answer to it until I had twice consulted my pillow. Surely, my situation is a little vexatious, and not a little singular. I am, it seems, called upon to disown the libels in which I am myself satirized as well as others. If I give no denial, things are fixed upon me which are not, on many accounts, very honourable to me. If I deny, it seems to be giving satisfaction to those to whom I owe none and intend none. In this perplexity all I can do is, to satisfy you, and to leave you to satisfy those whom you think worthy of being informed. I have, I dare say, to nine-tenths of my acquaintance, denied my being the author of Junius, or having any knowledge of the author, as often as the thing was mentioned, whether in jest or earnest, in style of disapprobation or of compliment. Perhaps I may have omitted to do so to you, in any formal manner, as not supposing you to have any suspicion of me. I now give you my word and honour that I am not the author of Junius, and that I know not the author of that paper, and I do authorize you to say so. This will, I suppose, be enough, without showing my letter, which might have the air of being written for the satisfaction of other persons than I mean to give it to. I wish the satisfaction of fair or friendly men; it would be vain to look to others. Most heartily I thank you for your friendly attention, and your good news; and am, with great truth and affection, &c.

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO —<sup>1</sup>

1771.

MY LORD,

When your lordship is pleased so severely to censure almost every part of my conduct and character, I should be without all comfort if my conscience did not as clearly acquit, as you have decisively condemned me.

I assure you, I wish to stand well in your opinion, and do not, even now, easily reconcile myself to the loss of it. I will, therefore, my lord, first endeavour to clear myself of that great and prolific fault, the source of so many others, with which your lordship charges me,—the *'not bearing to receive instruction from, my friends, and not being able to distinguish admonition from reproach'*.

My lord, when your lordship informs me (using what you tell me is the 'language of the world', and adopting that supposed language,) *'that such arrogance in a man of my condition is intolerable'*; your phrase does, to my poor understanding, imply some contempt of my condition, and a very ill opinion of my temper and character; and, therefore, might pass with a man professing no better than mere human feelings, as reviling rather than advice. I say nothing of the term of 'ridiculous folly', and that suppressed epithet which is so very easily supplied, and can be supplied by none but a very offensive term.

These, my lord, and some other expressions, together with a general sweeping censure of my whole conduct,

<sup>1</sup> This paper, (the draft of which is corrected in Mr. Burke's own handwriting,) is in the form of a letter, which, judging from internal evidence, was doubtless addressed to Dr. William Markham, then Bishop of Chester, and afterwards Archbishop of York. It appears to be in answer to a letter of remonstrance from the bishop on Burke's public conduct, couched in no measured language, as the quotations given in the reply sufficiently prove.

might well make me consider your lordship's letter as designed to mortify, not to instruct me. The former effect, whether you intended it or not, it did most perfectly accomplish.

You think I ought to show myself more of a philosopher in bearing such treatment. It is certain I have endeavoured, all my life, to train my understanding and my temper in the studies and habits of philosophy. In some few things, I fancy I am grown almost a stoic ; but your lordship's unkindness has attacked me on a side on which I was absolutely unguarded, and I bear it like a girl.

If I do not act a proper part in life, it is not, as your lordship is resolved to suppose, for want of sufficient admonition. If my enemies had been silent (your lordship knows they are not), there are those of another description near me, who behold my faults with all the anxious sensibility of real affection. They are not more disinterested friends and sanguine advocates, than they are strict and faithful monitors, that keep watch on every action of my life. Such are those very persons whose warmth your lordship supposes to scare away truth from approaching me. Let those who see them and me together, judge between your lordship and them. But passing them by, whenever your lordship did me the honour of your advice, if I was not always prudent enough to profit of it, be so good as to recollect what expression of heat from me attended the occasion, or what distant and unfriendly coldness followed it. Till the moment of your letter, do you remember a single angry word that ever passed between us ?

Your lordship has fixed a period for your ceasing to exercise that part of the office of friend which consists in counsel. Pardon me, my lord, your goodness has been much more extensive than you imagine it. I could put you in mind of another obliging interposition of your advice, a good while after that period, and on a point, too, of public conduct ; I mean the advice you gave me in relation to the payment of the civil-list

debts. It is true, I was of an opinion different from that of your lordship, and acted upon my own; but you must know that, very soon after (as soon, indeed, as I could see you), we were apparently, as we ought to have been, on the very best terms that can be imagined.

Your lordship, looking about for my faults with more solicitude than I deserve to be honoured with, rests in particular upon my having been formerly 'hurt at your advice, to bring down the aim of my ambition to a lower level, and not to look at an office', to which, it seems, at one time I had aspired. I don't recollect the conversation; very possibly your lordship did give me some such advice. Presently I will speak to the matter of it; but you will think, I dare say, on comparing facts and circumstances, that I could hardly have been seriously angry with you on that occasion; for if I was not angry with those who gave me neither that office nor any other office, but if, on the contrary, I have adhered to them with the most zealous and affectionate steadiness, in all their fortunes, is it to be conceived that I could show any real resentment to your lordship—my close and confidential friend—only for advising me not to look upon only one of those objects, none of which I could obtain from my ministerial friends? No—my lord;—the thing is impossible; your memory must have failed you. But if your lordship would persuade any body that my feelings on that occasion could bear a resemblance to those which tear my heart to pieces on this—here are your two letters;—and if this were your usual style of admonition, will mankind be astonished if I always felt it on the naked nerve, and with the quickest and sorest sensibility? But it was not;—it was far from it. You never said such things, and I never had feelings, in any sort, like my present. Yet even now, with such letters on my table, am I irritated to any improper rudeness, or do I go an inch beyond the immediate matter of my grievance?

I know not what is contained in private cabinets,

but I have never seen published in any collection, in any age, one resembling those which I have received from your lordship, except one which was written as a letter of consolation from Sir Francis Bacon to Lord Chief Justice Coke, upon the latter's falling under the displeasure of the court. This consolatory epistle does almost come up to the asperity of your lordship's late letters to me.

So far as to my impatience of admonition : now, as to the conversation relative to Lord Mansfield. I must beg you, my lord, not to suppose me capable of that 'jejune, puerile, inconclusive, disjointed reasoning' you attribute to me. Be so obliging as to distinguish in my conversation with you at Kew-green, the two most different things in the world ; the reports which I related as the first causes of my uneasiness, from the matter I wished you to touch in your discourse with Lord M. as what appeared to me irrefragable presumption, equal to proof, that his lordship did not discourage these attacks upon me. It is very true, that your lordship did not think I had any ground to be displeased with Lord M., and you did frequently divert the argument from the presumption I mentioned as my ground for complaint, to the town-talk which I related to you merely as matter of conversation. On that account, and on that only, and to prevent that confusion of distinct matters into which (whatever I could do) I saw you inclined to run, I wrote your lordship the letter you mention, and which you do not condemn.

But, under favour, what I asserted of your lordship's not having shown any disapprobation whatsoever of the style and temper of my message, which afterwards raised such a storm, is strictly true. Your lordship does not dispute this fact ; it made the whole of my assertion, and your letter demonstrates the truth of it. As to the particular communication or message, I really think it more agreeable to the statement given in my last letter, than to that mode in which your lordship recollects it ; but this being a matter of memory, your

lordship is at liberty to take it even in your own way. Let it stand in the broad glare of light into which you have put it, and I can hardly think that Lord M. himself (the very party concerned) could hold it so shocking an offence, that, considering myself (though at a very respectful distance) his friend, I thought it not right in him to suffer me to be abused in a manner beyond all example, as the author of libels upon him, when I was sure he might have prevented it; and that he ought not to be surprised if I acted no longer in that character. My situation was ridiculously vexatious; publicly abused on one side for the civil things I did say of him, and on the other, tore to pieces for attacks which I never made upon him.

I hope I am not mistaken; but I would not put to the account of civility to Lord Mansfield anything that ought not fairly to be entered to that article. In my parliamentary vote, I never have consulted anything but the intrinsic merits of the measure itself, or its extrinsic tendency to do good or evil upon the whole. For this, he is no ways obliged to me, but I have more than once gone beyond the necessity of my argument to speak as handsome things of him, as the extent of my very limited powers would allow. My kinsman, Mr. William Burke, has done the same.

If Lord Mansfield (I do not know that he is) be exalted on one side, in such transcendent stateliness as utterly to disregard my civilities, I hope his dignity is evenly and equitably balanced; and that on the other side, he could not violently resent the threat (as your lordship calls it) of discontinuing those civilities on which he sets so slight a value. This is but the equality essential to a great character. But if he be as wise a man as I think him, and such a lover of fame as he declares himself to be, he will not agree with your lordship in imagining the public testimony of an honest man, (not of the less value if that man should take totally a different line of politics), to be so 'very contemptible in the possession, or so very ridiculous in the loss'; nor will he consider it as

so 'horribly unnatural' in any man who thinks that his voluntary and disinterested civilities have been met with injurious returns, if he, in his anger, should 'threaten to withhold them' in future. Few persons are altogether so stately, and I trust your lordship is mistaken in your opinion of Lord Mansfield.

But supposing that my message (as your lordship calls it) were as ill-conceived and improper as you state it, you were under no necessity of delivering that message. You did not deliver it; you were not obliged to deliver any message at all. The whole passed in private conversation between us two. How could this justify that torrent of reproach with which, on cold deliberation, you have chosen to overwhelm my manners, disposition, principles, connexions, friendships, and relations; the whole tenor of the public and private conversation of my life? Was *this* necessary, my lord? Most men, in my situation, would think it an opportunity eagerly taken, but not very happily chosen, of breaking by a quarrel a long friendship, which, if the contrariety of our sentiments made it no longer agreeable, in wisdom ought to be rather gently and gradually unravelled, than to be so very rudely and unartificially rent asunder. This, you know, was the advice of one of our great masters in the science of life and morals, upon occasions of this unhappy nature.

I have done, for ever, with this business. In whatever light it appears to your lordship, most people would think it a trifling error at the worst. But your second letter has opened a much higher order, and a much greater number and variety of charges against me. These are, indeed, so very grave and so very numerous, that you have given me a right to be a little burdensome and tedious to you in my answer to them. That answer ought to be full and satisfactory: first, because I had already frequently vindicated myself on several of these subjects. You remember the accusation perfectly, but by some accident very sinister to me, you absolutely forget the defence. I think it, therefore, necessary to place it distinctly and

permanently before you ; in order that a memory, in this one instance a little imperfect, may not be the means of misleading the best judgement in the world.

In the next place, I would not, for any consideration, that my son should happen to meet such horrid offences charged on me, and on his nearest relations, by my seventeen years' friend (—by the very person who answered for him at the font—) without letting him know that I was able to say something in our defence. I would not have him come into life, oppressed by my imputed faults from my reputed friends ; that the innocent child may know, as I trust the world will know and acknowledge, that he has not crept into it from a 'hole of adders', to which your lordship (I leave you to feel with what humanity and justice) has thought proper to compare his father's house.

My lord, I may have very little to leave him but the character, the friends, I would add (if I did not fear your lordship's charge of arrogance) the example of his father. It is most essential to him that these should not be rendered vile, cheap, or odious, in the opinion of mankind. In order to do him this indispensable justice—in order to leave this little inheritance clear and unencumbered to him, I will consider your lordship's heavy accusation under the three heads into which it seems to be divided.

First—my conduct in conjunction with my political connexions ; secondly—certain matters which your lordship charges to my particular account ; and lastly—the various crimes which your lordship has collected from the private conversations of my nearest friends and relations. To all these I shall answer fully, distinctly, and, I trust, satisfactorily.

Your lordship, assuming the persons of others whose opinions you do not condemn, considers the measures of my party, 'in which I have been so forward to take a lead, as running the extreme line of wickedness'. This is what your lordship states as the description of our measures ; and as to our morals, you describe us (still stating the opinion of others, of which you express no

disapprobation), 'as persons who first used their sovereign basely, and then sought their justification in slandering his character.' Heavy charges, both on persons and actions !

My lord, if by accident you believe that such charges, on such men as compose our party, are groundless—pray, why could you not imagine with equal justice, aided by a little of not unbecoming partiality, that my particular part in those actions, reported from the same bad authority, was not more blameable than that of the rest of our party ? But if your lordship (as you seem to do) rather inclines to give credit to these imputations, then, my lord, I do freely and cheerfully take my share in the measures. I take it with such numbers and such persons, both of our own and other bodies, that I am as well defended as respectable authority and lawful example can make me. Your lordship ought to pity me, under the influence of so plausible and irresistible a seduction.

But, my lord, I do not secure a presumption in my favour, merely in the number and weight of the present *opposition*. If we have 'run the extreme line of wickedness', there are but few now in his majesty's service who have not pushed us very hard in the race. Some have gone over one part, some another ; some almost over all the course, along with us. I can recollect but a very few who can escape much better than I can. unless error is to be rectified by inconsistency of character.

Whenever your lordship, or anybody else, shall distinctly specify any one of those measures, be it what it may, I will engage to call out some person now high in his majesty's service and favour, to whom I will commit the cause, who must either disgrace himself or fully vindicate our proceedings. If you do not harshly censure this ministerial advocate, permit me to say, that your lordship's justice must necessarily suffer us to escape. It is not, I am sure, the fortune and situation, but the actions of men. which become the subjects of your indignation. I am really afraid

to join in your lordship's censure of our conduct, lest I should lean too heavily on some respectable persons in authority, and thus again become taxed with 'ill-treating some of the highest people in the kingdom'.

You do not think I am going into the business of six years—this is infinite. No; I shall go upon general but very satisfactory grounds. If the measures we have carried into legislative acts be so extremely wicked, why does not the court, with the power of the nation in their hands, redress the mischief by repealing our acts and regulations? If the measures we have proposed and lost were so wicked, we were wicked only in the intention, we have failed in the act. If the nation likes our proceedings, it enjoys the benefit of them. Posterity must judge of their intrinsic value, and of the prudence, the reach of thought, the decorum, consistency, moderation, and justice, with which they were conceived and conducted, from the beginning to the end.

Upon the merit of the ministerial conduct, that of the opposition must finally stand or fall. The matter of some part of it is not left to the representations of those that your lordship lives with. I must suppose you have not read the grounds upon which the opposition to some of the capital measures of administration have been justified; works which ought to be perused by every one, before he peremptorily attributes 'the extreme line of wickedness' to the conduct of large bodies of men.

As to 'my forwardness in taking the lead in the measures of the party', I am not sure that I perfectly understand the nature of the charge. I am no leader, my lord, nor do I ever answer for the conduct of any one but myself. If your meaning be that I commonly make the motions, or am forward in laying the grounds for opposition, your lordship is certainly misinformed. I generally speak in justification of the vote I am to give, very late in the debate. But if, by *forwardness* and *lead*, you mean nothing more than that I do, with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength, support

the measures I believe to be right, the fact is undoubtedly true. But before the fact itself, or the earnestness with which it is pursued, be clearly censurable, the measures must be proved to be wrong, or to be unimportant. My lord, it is not my interest in my own case, nor my disposition in any case, to receive the assertions of my enemies as competent proof of either ; and as yet I have heard nothing else.

After stating by an aposiopesis, the force of which mode of speech no one better understands than your lordship, that our party has 'run the extreme line of wickedness'—in the same mode you speak of them as having 'used the king basely, and then seeking their justification in slandering his character'.

My lord—in one thing you do me great justice. You say that my opinion differs very widely from yours upon this subject. It does indeed ; it differs as widely as the remotest extremes can differ. To speak fully to the point is difficult ; to be wholly silent, impossible. The charge is heavy, and it is as general as it is heinous. Like the former, on the measures of the party, it points to no one circumstance of action, time, or place, which can particularize it. No defence can, therefore, be made, but by opposing to it the denial of both the propositions of which the charge is compounded ; and by showing, as far as general presumptions can go, the utter improbability of the existence of any truth in either of them. Indeed, my lord, you have been cruelly abused and imposed upon. I am sure I shall think myself happy, if the subject of my defence, however it may fail for myself, may be obliquely and accidentally the means of undeceiving you, in a mistaken opinion of the best characters in the kingdom.

Before I say a word further, I must observe that your lordship is the very first from whom I ever knew that such a charge was made. I never heard it in any conversation ;—I never read it in any of the numerous publications on the part of the court. I have always heard Lord Rockingham and his friends censured for

a behaviour, rather too reserved and managed for the purposes of opposition. But I make no doubt that such discourses as you mention are held. They are held very improperly. They are held with more mischief to the persons, in whose favour they seem to be uttered, than even to those whom they intend to injure.

Will you permit me to speak on this business with a frankness suitable to its importance. Indeed, my lord, his majesty's servants have, in my humble opinion, made too free with the sacred name of their master, both in their apologies for themselves, and in their accusations of others. I wish the gentlemen of the court to consider seriously how well they consult an honour in which we have all of us so great an interest, and in which they have so peculiar and religious a trust, when they can affirm that Lord Rockingham and his friends have treated the king basely.

By the tenor of the sentence, I must conclude that this charge of base treatment is fixed at the time when Lord Rockingham and his friends had the honour to serve the crown. Your lordship will recollect that Lord Rockingham was called into the closet a full year after his removal from office, and pressed to resume it with large offers for himself and for his friends, and even with powers still more extensive. Do these persons, so affectedly zealous, reflect in what manner they consult the personal glory of their sovereign, when they represent him as showing such favour to, and putting such confidence in, those who were capable of treating him with *baseness*? Do they, in such a charge, consult the future connexion that ought ever to exist between the *glory* and the possible *interest* of their master, in case the convenience of his service should, once more, induce him to call any of those eminent persons, who are charged with having treated him basely, into employment? But if they choose, on a supposition of the validity of the charge, to suppose that such an arrangement is impossible, is it then altogether for the king's advantage to persuade such and so large bodies of men, that they are pro-

scribed, and, as it were, disinherited by the common protector and father of all his subjects ?

Besides, let me say, that though on every account the character of the sovereign ought to be preserved inviolate, and that, too, with the utmost care and tenderness, yet there are other characters to be preserved also ; characters in which, though the subject has not an equal, he has yet a very considerable interest. Your lordship will hardly think it altogether prudent (I will go no further, for I dare not return a word of the hard language I received), wantonly to toss great names in people's faces, in order to put them out of countenance, and to oblige them either from shame to abandon their defence, or from warmth to say things which may be misinterpreted into a criminal disrespect. The former is hardly fair in argument, nor is the latter in morals, though it often may be meant innocently, as in this case I am ready to believe. It has the air of insidiously drawing men upon dangerous ground, in order to entrap them on it ; and this, if I were in your lordship's place, and armed with your authority from station and knowledge, I would certainly say to those who have the levity to hold such discourses.

I would also submit to your lordship's consideration, whether it be right to set the people upon too many inquiries into these matters, that trench so nearly upon anecdote ? Certainly, my lord, the last thing the people of England will suspect in Lord Rockingham and his great friends, is anything whatsoever of baseness, either done or suffered. They will inquire whence and how this surprising charge has arisen ; and possibly, in the course of such an inquiry, their censure may fall not lightly upon those who are capable of abusing either their ears, or the ears of their sovereign, with such a gross charge upon the best subjects that he has.

Any prince might glory in having such subjects. He might well rejoice in finding that the persons who have always been the truest to the succession of his family, are most distinguished among his people for their unspotted honour and integrity, for their dis-

interested love of their country, and for every virtue, public and private. No wise king of Great Britain would think it for his credit to let it go abroad that he considered himself, or was considered by others, as personally at variance with a Lord Rockingham, a Duke of Richmond, a Duke of Portland, an Earl of D——, the families of the Cavendishes, with a Savile, a Dowdeswell, and a very long train of names, who are the ornaments of his country in peace, and to some of whom he owes some of the greatest glories of his own, and his predecessor's reign, in all the various services of the late war. The public will not lightly believe, that the close connexions of the late Duke of Newcastle and the late Duke of Cumberland, have been capable of using basely a king of the Brunswick line.

As little will any one credit the other part of the charge, that they sought their justification in traducing his majesty's character. Till this day they have never heard of this charge of base treatment, and, therefore, most certainly never could be put to this justification. But if you mean that they use it in defence of their measures in opposition, surely you cannot imagine that they are so miserably put to it for argument, as to have no other way of defending themselves but by traducing any character whatsoever. If they are alleged to have used such justification in parliamentary debate, the time and occasion ought to be marked. If in writing—the piece ought to be shown, and ought with some probability to be carried home to them. If in conversation—the informer ought to appear, and make good the matter he relates. In no other way than one of these three, can these persons have committed the offence your lordship mentions to be charged upon them.

Avoiding all offensive terms, or any kind of recrimination on their accusers, I simply say they deny the truth of the charge, and I trust nobody can bring a shadow of proof for it. I am sorry that amongst your lordship's numerous friends, you could find no one man

under personal obligations to the leader of that respectable party, who might long since have removed those impressions from your lordship's mind, and rendered my poor defence unnecessary.

I have said all I mean to say in vindication of my having gloried in my political connexions, and in the part I have taken along with them. My principles, indeed the principles of common sense, lead me to act in *corps*. Accident first threw me into this party. When I was again at liberty, knowledge and reflection induced me to re-enter it; principle and experience have confirmed me in it. Your lordship will find it difficult to show where a man, who wished to act systematically in public business, could have arranged himself more reputably. By arranging myself with them, I trust I have given some sort of security to the public for my good behaviour. That versatility, those sudden evolutions, which have something derogated from the credit of all public professions, are things not so easy in large bodies, as when men act alone, or in light squadrons. A man's virtue is best secured by shame, and best improved by emulation in the society of virtuous men. Most of my public proceedings have been in the strictest concurrence with that party; and to your lordship's candour and mature consideration, I hope I may safely leave both the party and its proceedings.

I now pass to the separate account you have opened with myself, for matters of my own private conduct. Here, my lord, you accuse me of maltreating the greatest men in the kingdom; you particularize, &c., &c., and you seem to think that I have not sufficiently 'distinguished myself from useless declaimers who are valued only for bear-garden talents'; and that I have given the world an 'impression of me, as a man capable of things dangerous and desperate'.

This is the peculium of blame, which your lordship has portioned out to me, and separated from the common stock. Pardon me, if I think you have your accounts of me from men of little moderation; indeed,

from a kind and class of enemies, far below the common generosity of that adverse character. Has your lordship then found me, in the innumerable conversations that we have had together for many years (which I now remember with a melancholy pleasure), a 'useless declaimer' and distinguished by 'bear-garden' talents? If your lordship has not found this in my conversation, (you will not affirm that you have,) why will you so easily give credit to those, who assert that I am of another character wherever you do not happen to see me?

My lord,—I have written some trifles. They are, indeed, full of imperfections, but they are not altogether 'useless declamations'; nor have they, I think, a great deal of the scurrilities of the 'bear-garden'. Some of them are written, too, on a subject of public controversy. But there I am safe enough. What a man writes, defends or accuses itself; what he speaks, is but too much at the mercy of narrators, and I have fallen amongst the very worst of that odious band.

Hypocrisy is no cheap vice; nor can our natural temper be masked for many years together. I have not lived, my lord, at any period of my life, nor do I live at present, in societies where the talents your lordship alludes to are in any sort of request. I live, and have lived, in liberal and humanized company; who, as they could never endure such a character, would be infinitely surprised at this imputation upon a person whom, at least, they tolerate.

As to some little occasional sallies out of serious business, which you have been ready to commend in other men, and which, when not ill-executed, have been commended by all ancient and modern critics, I am sure they are not without their use in popular debates. For my own part in them, I can only say, that if I could receive any comfort under your lordship's displeasure, I have the consolation not to be equally ill-thought of by everybody. You know, I am sure, a person of rank,<sup>1</sup> long removed from public business in which he had

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Chesterfield.

much distinguished himself, and who was equally distinguished for the elegance of his manners and the well-bred felicity of his wit, has a great deal more than once repeated, without any very harsh censure, some of the trifles which less grave occasions have drawn from me in the house. He has even condescended to say most obliging things to myself upon the subject. That person, I assure your lordship, is not so poor in the resources of real politeness, as to be driven to supply his deficiencies out of the fund of ill-placed flattery. He is no way connected with me, in party or otherwise. He is too considerable to be one of my admirers ; and all I shall say is, he did not find in any of my little pleasantries, the relish of that celebrated academy from which your lordship is pleased to derive them.

The attacks I have made are specified to be on Mr. Grenville, Mr. Rigby, Sir William Bagot,<sup>1</sup> and Lord Barrington.<sup>2</sup> You could lengthen, you say, the catalogue ;—certainly you could ; for I have had rather more altercations than are mentioned in this list, and your lordship as certainly supposes me the aggressor in all of them. As to the first, I only desire, in common justice to me, and even to Mr. Grenville, that his court friends will not be too superfluously kind to his memory ; that they will not resent any injuries done to him, for which he had no resentment himself. Perhaps your lordship does not know, that I had the honour of being on the best terms with Mr. Grenville, which continued uninterrupted to his death ;—that he gave to my kinsman, William Burke, and to me, a pressing invitation to his house in the country ;—that in his house in town, upon a business too which most people would think delicate, we had a long conversation, wherein, without any dereliction of principle on either side, we settled the matter to mutual satisfaction ; and that he afterwards was so obliging as to enter upon

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Bagot, Member of Parliament for Staffordshire, afterwards Lord Bagot.

<sup>2</sup> William Wildman, Viscount Barrington, at this time Secretary-at-war.

a very curious and interesting conversation, relative to many of the most essential particulars of his ministry and life. His brother, Lord Temple, is known to cherish the most affectionate reverence for his memory. I have the pleasure to assure your lordship, that I am at this instant in intimacy and on terms of friendship with Lord Temple, who most assuredly would not do me that honour, if he thought my difference in opinion with him, or his brother, had ever carried me to lengths unjustifiable among gentlemen.

As to my supposed attack on Mr. Rigby, your lordship is then of opinion that, of course, I must have been the aggressor, and that it is impossible the known urbanity of Mr. Rigby's style of debating could have given just offence. I am at your lordship's mercy on the subject, and no disculpation can avail me; only I am to do justice to the very handsome behaviour of your friend, Mr. Rice, on that occasion.

Sir William Bagot, my lord, made two several wanton and utterly unprovoked attacks upon me: I did nothing more than repel them; the first time with great good humour, at neither time with ill-temper or ill-manners. On the latter occasion, Lord John Cavendish, a man not more remarkable for his firmness than his great moderation, interrupting my defence, declared if I had not spoken on the first occasion, he would have done it himself, and have taken nearly the same ground. Sir William Bagot seemed sensible that he had gone too far; he made some apology for it. I could name a line of witnesses to you on this business, above all suspicion of partiality to me, who know I was not the aggressor in the beginning of the dispute, nor the most bitter in the prosecution of it; and whether, on the whole, I did any discredit, on so unexpected a provocation, to my own character or to good manners, the House, who heard me with every mark of approbation, must judge. Since that time I have often met Sir William Bagot on various business, and neither of us appeared to have any remembrance of the altercation. But my offence, it

seems, is perfectly recorded elsewhere, along with the rest of my indelible transgressions.

You are kind enough to tell me, as the end of the list, of my execrations of Mr. Yorke during his last illness. I wish, my lord, you had not put my patience and prudence to so sore a trial. But they will endure even that test. No man honoured Mr. Yorke, living and dead, more than myself. I hold his memory in a reverence that is almost superstitious. I know him to have possessed a wonderful erudition in all kinds. I knew him to be a person of the purest principles and morals, and of a strict and punctilious sense of honour, and that he was one who felt for fame with but too fatal a sensibility. Let me add, that I have myself a large part in his loss : he was much my friend. I say so, because I should count it impious to distrust the frequent professions of regard which I had from him. When your lordship gives me leave to know, that you hold me utterly incapable of the base act you charge upon me, I will tell you what it was that gave rise to that most malicious of all calumnies. Till then, I must content myself with assuring you, that the story, as you have heard it, is absolutely false.

Now, my lord, at the black tail of this black catalogue of accusations, let me stir up the principle of candour, which all this slander has, for a moment, smothered in you, and ask you seriously, whether you believe that, in coming into the House of Commons, ' I entered like a wolf into a fold of lambs ' ; and with ferocious and savage fury, ' snapped now at one, now at another ' of those meek and passive creatures, without mercy, fear, or shame ?

Does not your lordship think it possible that, in such a place, where such matters are agitated as will call out all of the wild beast that lurks in human nature, there are other animals with fangs and claws besides me ? Does your lordship think it absolutely incredible, that attempts might be made to *pull me down*, and that I may have been necessitated to make some strong efforts to *keep myself up* ? Do you seriously think that the

understandings of your narrators are better disciplined in the duties and decorums of public life than mine ? Do you imagine that they are not equally liable to passions similar to mine, which may mislead them in the representation, possibly in the conception of my conduct ? Have they not interests far more considerable than mine, which may as naturally bias them from the straight line of their duty ? You were ' overborne ', you say, when you did me the very great honour of becoming my advocate, ' by the number of charges against me.' I am sorry that you threw up your brief so early, and that I lost, on such an insufficient ground, all the advantage of your lordship's goodness and ability ; because it is evidently not the *number*, but the *truth* of the charges, that ought to prevail in any equal tribunal. If it should be otherwise, nothing will save me, either now or in future ; for you may be very sure that, as many as my actions are, just so many will be the charges of my enemies. Did your lordship ever hear of a man, acting in public, who was free from them ? If I were, with all expressions of tenderness, friendship, and compassion, to write down but one-half of the language of their enemies, concerning any given public persons whom *you* know and esteem, I am very much afraid, if I sent it to you, your lordship would think it little else than a libel ; if I sent it to any of *themselves*, you would think it a gross insult.

Suppose that one of the best friends they have, were to make such a collection, for the instruction and entertainment of Lord Chatham or Lord Mansfield. the Duke of Grafton or of Lord North. They are greater men than I ;—they have the advantage of their dignity. Worse things have been said of them. Your lordship does not think that the eminence of their station ought to make the hearing of truth less necessary to them, or make it less proper for them to hear it with temper. In what light would you consider such a communication to these persons : even though it were made lest they should happen not to be apprised of the tone of their enemies, or be unacquainted with

the language of an uniform series of five years' daily newspapers ?

I know well enough what my enemies say : I know too what my conscience answers to their malice. My public conduct, co-extensive with my largest relation, must be my glory or my shame. Has your lordship found one single part of it to be praiseworthy ?

If I act in party, you more than insinuate that the party runs the extreme line of wickedness ; if I act alone, then I have some wickedness of supererogation beyond that line ; some eccentric crimes to answer for. In every altercation I am the aggressor ; my debate is declamation ; my railing, the bear-garden ; in my motions, I show myself capable of things dangerous and desperate ; the daily conversations of my friends and relations, are guilty of all the malignity of treason ; my house, by the deductions of no exceptionable logic, easily taken for an hole of adders.

My lord, all this and more, are your sentiments of me, I trust expressed in anger, and in the vehemence of a mistaken zeal ; from which no talents, nor situation, will always exempt even men of piety and virtue. If, indeed, you censure many material parts of my little public system, I do not wonder that you condemn the whole.

My principles are all settled and arranged, and indeed, at my time of life, and after so much reading and reflexion, I should be ashamed to be caught at hesitation and doubt, when I ought to be in the midst of action, not as I have seen some to be, as Milton says, ' unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.' However, this necessary use of the principles I have will not make me shut my ears to others which, as yet, I have not, only I wish to act upon some that are rational.

' I ill-treat the first men in the kingdom.' If you show me that in no case this may be my duty, I will confess I am in the wrong. I am a respecter of authority ; but, my lord, I execute my share of an important magistracy ; and I conceive that it may happen to be part of my office to accuse, and even very ill-treat, the

first men in the kingdom. Would your lordship have me so treat clerks in office, who transcribe letters, or sergeants of the guard, who execute orders ?

‘I attacked Lord Barrington : ’—I did so ; and, let me add, I attacked Lord Weymouth as much as him ; and I attacked Lord Hillsborough as much as either, though on another ground. But I did this in a regular, sober, constitutional manner. However, I bear your censure the better, as I am absolutely satisfied that, to this minute, you neither know a single ground on which I made the attack, nor the temper with which I conducted myself, in any of the proceedings upon which you charge me. I never made more than two motions. As to that on St. George’s Fields, I did in effect repeat it ; and I never slept so happily as after I had discharged myself of that accusation. I now give over the pursuit, not as blameable, but hopeless. It was, indeed, very nearly what your lordship calls it, a proceeding ‘ dangerous and desperate ’ ;—desperate as to hope of success,—dangerous, as it has been a means of forfeiting your good opinion. To its object it proved very innoxious ; it has not diminished a shilling of Lord Barrington’s salary. But if it had succeeded, I have no doubt that very salutary effects to the public would have followed from it.

I acted to the best of my judgement. It would be hard to find a bad motive for my conduct in this particular. I am a man of none but civil talents, such as they are ; and I can have no views from a state of disorder and confusion ; no, not more even than your lordship.

Your lordship tells me ‘ it is not what pretensions I may have, but what the world will choose to allow me.’ What pretensions, my lord, am I making to anything that the world has to allow or to refuse ? I make no pretensions, my lord, but those which, with God’s blessing, no power can take from me ; those of doing my duty agreeably to my own ideas, within the laws of the land, and the rules and orders of the body to which I belong ; and I will do that duty with such

vigour, or such remission, as I may think will best answer the purpose of my trust. If by pretensions you mean places, I solicit none, and I really think I never shall; though I would very gladly serve the Crown, and be of use to my own family, if I could do it with honour.

Your lordship, whose mean opinion of me I lament, but cannot avoid, formerly thought it (as you now tell me) insanity *in me* to look to an employment then vacant. This matter of mad ambition give me leave to explain.

Lord Rockingham, as you observe, and as I knew, was on the point of being turned out of office. I had observed, what I might do without great sagacity, that the having filled any considerable place, did raise the credit and authority of men much higher than any other circumstance whatever. Looking for what has happened,—a long minority, I thought the name of such an employment might be of some use, for (as your lordship may, if you please, guess) I never meant to keep it. However mad this idea may have been, it only floated on my mind. I talked to a friend or two, and beat the thing backward and forward in conversation. The ministry was changed a very few days after. It was no formed project :—I never so much as spoke to Lord Rockingham upon it;—this he knows,—and there is the whole of my madness.

Your lordship at that time, you say, advised me to make ‘a seat at the Board of Trade my object’. I dare say you did, though I confess I forget the conversation. It is undoubtedly a very honourable employment, and much above my deserts;—if the parallel was only between that office and those deserts. That place was, however, not my object; among other reasons for *one* that was very obvious,—that there was then no vacancy. The employment, to which I wished the nomination, was open.

Your lordship thought, and still seems to think me insane, in wishing that employment upon another idea;—because I had then only been private secretary to

a minister. This oblique insinuation I might leave where I found it, if I did not think that your lordship grounded your opinion on very mistaken principles, whatever the merit of the particular matter then in question might have been. I must, therefore, beg leave again humbly to express my sentiments, though they should again be treated as the effect of frenzy.

I did not ground my pretensions on any supposed rank of private secretary. This employment I knew, as well as anybody did, formed no pretension ; because it was no known office, nor bears any rank whatsoever in the State. But I conceived then, and still do so, that the rule of preferment in the offices of this kingdom, is not MERE *official gradation*. The rank in office is to be rated by the rank which men hold in Parliament, and by that only. This rank, though not exactly definable, is very easily understood ; and the name and thing have been much in the mouths of all public men. If the rule of official rank were any other, the consequence, according to my ideas, would obviously tend to the utter relinquishment of any but the most slavish and passive conduct, in all those who ever look to the service of the State. Indeed, it would be fatal to the State itself.

On your lordship's standard I must have very low hopes, or none at all. I have no more official pretensions now than I had the first hour of my election. I therefore, my lord, refuse to admit your lordship's rule, and I am authorized not only by reason but by practice. Many have made their first step as high as that you allude to, and much higher, and all from parliamentary, not official ground. I do not name them, for fear of your lordship's censure of arrogance in the comparison. But, my lord, other gentlemen held actually that very office afterwards which I wished for only in designation ; who, though I very highly respect them, I will not believe stood higher on parliamentary ground than I did.

I think, my lord, very poorly of Ned Burke or his pretensions ; but, by the blessing of God, the just

claims of active members of Parliament shall never be lowered in the estimation of mankind by my personal or official insignificance. The dignity of the House shall not be sunk by my coming into it. At the same time, my lord, I shall keep free from presumption. If ever things should stand in such a situation as to entitle me to look to office, it is my friends who must discover the place I hold in Parliament, I never shall explain it. Rank is not my object for my own sake, I assure you ; for if ever I were to ask for employment (as I shall not), vanity would not be my guide in my requests. Some service to my own honest interests, and to those of others, would be my rule. For I protest most solemnly that, in my eye, situated as I am, and thinking as I do of the intrinsic dignity of an active but independent member of Parliament, I should look upon the highest office the subject could aspire to, as an object rather of humiliation than of pride. It would very much arrange me in point of convenience ; it would do nothing for me in point of honour.

To purge away all further symptoms of insanity, in not admitting your lordship's rule of official gradation, permit me to say, that even at the time you allude to, I was not very young, but as much a man as I am now, and as fit for any kind of business. I was as little inclined to the course of changing about with every wind, without regard to men or things ; and when you combine these two circumstances, of time of life and some aim at uniformity of conduct, the madness would be in acting upon the ground taken from official gradation, and not from parliamentary rank ; even if such ground had been thought of in this country, or that rule had been laid down for any man in it except myself. My friends know whether I have harassed them with requests, or whether my pretensions ever deranged their business, or disturbed their quiet. Till they complain, every one else, methinks, may well be silent.

I could say a great deal on the ground of men's pretensions in this country, but there is more than enough for both of us. Your lordship has compelled

me to speak more than I wish, upon places and employments. It is a subject not often in my thoughts, nor likely to be greatly my concern, even though your lordship has removed the terrors of the proscription which hung over me, by securing me an asylum in my native insignificance. This humble cottage, which is not to be shaken even *pulsante Caesarea manu*, I take refuge in most joyfully. Your lordship is so condescending, to offer to enter it along with me, but I beg you to go no further than the door; it is, indeed, a sort of lodging as unsuitable to your dignity as to your abilities.

Your lordship tells me that my ideas of that proscription had arisen only from my imagination having outrun my judgement. I have no such races between my imagination and my judgement, as your lordship, who speaks the language of my enemies like a native, is pleased to suppose. They have no king's plate before them to animate the contention. They are a pair of slow and orderly beasts of very little figure, but fit enough to draw together, and, I trust, to pull themselves and their poor master out of all the mire into which our enemies have endeavoured to plunge us. It was neither my arrogance, nor my irregular imagination, that induced me to think as I did. Your lordship told me 'that I might *put it out of the power* of any possible administration to serve me'. Who is there but the king, who can restrain the powers of any possible administration? And when you assured me that 'this was *most certainly true*', I did believe you said it upon some good authority; I did not say whose authority it was. It was, my lord, my ignorance of courts, not my arrogance, that made me put this plain interpretation upon plain words. For, knowing those of high place only by hearsay, I have read, that monarchs in former days had sometimes been, by advisers very unlike themselves, induced to turn the tremendous majesty of their resentments on objects as low and unworthy as myself. Your lordship will, therefore, pardon this error, in which there was nothing worse

than, what is inevitable to a man of my condition,—a want of knowledge of the great world. This probable proscription that I had so much dreaded, I am now, it seems, only to understand as your lordship's own conjecture, arising from the favourable light under which you have been, for some time, accustomed to behold my conduct. As to 'your having no pain in doing ill-natured things', I knew and felt a man of the very reverse character; but in your lordship's letters, I know nothing of my old friend but the handwriting, which I know but too well.

After giving the testimony of my enemies, as grounds of charge against me, your lordship comes to their assistance, towards the close of your letter, with a little of your own; and this too for a purpose, which, even after all I had read, did not a little astonish me. It was in justification of the libellers for having fixed on me as the author of Junius, from a resemblance which your lordship supposes my house bears to 'an hole of adders'. My lord, I am sorry to find that these writers have so able an advocate, which, though they stand in need of, I have not at all the charity to wish them. But since these worthy gentlemen are under your lordship's protection, I say not one word against them, except that, in this instance, they did not reason logically, nor draw their conclusions in any good form. For, passing that most obliging simile of 'the adders' hole' as not in strict argument, I did not 'furnish the premises' your lordship supposes; and if I had, the conclusion of these gentlemen was irregular. For, supposing all your lordship says was not very greatly mistaken, how does it follow from the *discourses* of my friends, that I am the author of Junius,—as these worthy persons peremptorily assert? Let me advance a step further, and suppose that the discourses which your lordship charges on my friends were not *theirs*, but *my own*; it must be proved that *no other* persons have held similar discourses, before the *singular* proposition of the conclusion could be valid against me. Hardly as your lordship thinks of us, you will scarcely

assert that we have a *monopoly of such discourse*. Indeed, there is no putting this argument in any way in which it will do ; and I must still think as I did before, that these gentlemen or their employers did not act in a manner altogether justifiable in drawing such a conclusion, from any premises with which your letter supposes them to have been furnished. Nothing but your good nature, which is always in existence, but, unfortunately for me, transferred to my worst enemies, could make you entertain a better opinion of that sort of logic.

My lord, this part of your letter is indeed very serious. The crimes are high,—the accuser of great authority,—and the persons accused my nearest and dearest friends. You would think me, I am sure, the basest of friends, the worst of brothers, and the most unworthy and unnatural of all men, if I took in very good part, and as an act of kindness, your lordship's charges against them.

My lord, Mr. William Burke, the first you set to the bar, has had the closest and longest friendship for me ; and has pursued it with such nobleness in all respects, as has no example in these times, and would have dignified the best periods of history. Whenever I was in question, he has been not only ready, but earnest even, to annihilate himself ; and he has not been only earnest but fortunate, in his endeavours in my favour. Looking back to the course of my life, I remember no one considerable benefit in the whole of it, which I did not, mediately or immediately, derive from him. To him I owe my connexion with Lord Rockingham. To him I am indebted for my seat in Parliament. To him it is I must refer all the happiness and all the advantages I received from a long acquaintance with your lordship. For me he gave up a respectable employment of a thousand pounds a year, with other very fair pretensions. He gave up an employment which he filled with pleasure to himself, with great honour to himself, and with great satisfaction to his principal in office. Indeed, he both held and quitted

it with such a well-arranged discharge of all his duties, that a strict friendship subsists between him and the principal he left, from that moment even to this, amidst all the rage and confusion of parties. But he resigned it to give an example and an encouragement to me,—not to grow fearful and languid in the course to which he had always advised me. To encourage me, he gave his own interest the first stab :—*Paete, non dolet*. This, my lord, was true friendship ; and if I act an honourable part in life, the first of all benefits, it is in great measure due to him. He loved your lordship too, and would have died for you,—I am thoroughly persuaded he would. He had the most ardent affection for you, and the most unbounded confidence in you. If there was any difference in his regard for you and me, it is, that there were certain disparities which made him look up to you with greater reverence. Such a friendship can grow in none but a soil favourable to, and producing every kind of virtue ; and, accordingly, he has nothing like a fault about him, that does not arise from the luxuriance of some generous quality: Do not ‘disinherit your son’ for anything Will. Burke is capable of doing. I look with pleasure and with the most auspicious hopes, and with, I am sure, very unaffected good wishes, on your growing family. But if I was their father, my prayer in their favour would be for half his virtues. I would ask for no more, because I would wish a good man to be happy and prosperous in the world.

My lord, I owe this honest testimony, all I can return, for a friendship of which I can never make myself deserving. As to him, my lord, I am not capable of telling you in what manner he felt your charges. He answers nothing to them ; he only bids me tell you, that never being able to suppose himself in a situation of serious controversy with your lordship, much less as the culprit in a *criminal accusation* for a matter of *state*, brought by *you* upon his *private* conversation, he knows not what to say. He is at your mercy. He really cannot put his pen to paper on this subject, though he

has two or three times attempted it. Permit me, my lord, on this very serious head, to lay before your lordship a very few matters for your consideration. I feel myself as averse to stating this matter to your lordship, in a style of controversy, as my friend is incapable of it. Will your lordship, then, have the goodness to consider that the conversations of your friend, to which your lordship gives, in your passion, such very hard names, have passed entirely *between you and him*, that they have passed in the freedom of friendship,—in the openness of the most unreserved confidence. Is it true, that no one was witness to anything capable of such a construction, out of the inmost recesses of your own family? Does your lordship recollect, that there was any stranger present in any mixed company, either at your house or elsewhere, who heard any such conversation? Now, my lord, if there be no such witness out of your own family (*te consule*), might it not be rather the entire confidence that Mr. Burke reposed in your honour, than any indiscretion, which had induced him to enter with you into topics in themselves delicate and extremely capable of misconstruction? I never will believe the loosest flow of the heart, in all its temporary feelings, to be indiscreet in conversation with you.

My lord, there is another consideration which I would beg leave to submit to you upon these supposed culpable conversations. I believe, if you call to mind times and circumstances, you will find that there could scarce have passed any private political conversation between Will. Burke and your lordship for near three years. A very hard statute was made concerning words, in the reign of King Charles the Second; but hard as it was, it limited the prosecution to be within . . . ;<sup>1</sup> otherwise, the statute would not have been hard but intolerable, and the reason is extremely clear. Words are fugitive; and the lapse of a little time may

<sup>1</sup> This blank in the manuscript is, of itself, almost a proof that the letter never was sent.

cancel such a variety of explanatory circumstances in the mind of the party accused, as extremely to enfeeble, perhaps entirely to destroy a very full defence. Besides, the memory of the informers may be full as fallacious as that of the party charged. If he has not set down the words, their true spirit may well have escaped him ; if he has, it furnishes a very just presumption that he has stored up this invidious matter for so long a time, not for the purposes of justice, but of malice. Your lordship will tell me that you are not now making a charge in a court of justice. Very true ; but permit me to say, that the equity and reason of these rules ought to be carried into all personal reproaches and revilings for supposed similar offences so long passed. When any person has not, *at the time, expressed any disapprobation of these discourses*, every principle of justice precludes him, and ought to stop his mouth for ever. Your lordship does, in effect, admit that you heard without any marks of disapprobation, discourses to which your lordship now gives appellations that, for your own sake, I cannot bear to repeat. You say that a ' dislike of altercation and a respect to your profession,' hindered you from expressing your sentiments at the time. May I presume to differ in this point, and to think that it was so far from being contrary to the duties and decencies of your sacred profession, that nothing was more strictly within both, than to give grave and sober counsel upon such occasions, to those with whom you condescended to live. If the immediate moment was too sudden, or the parties appeared too warm, advice upon the next day would have been prudent from a wise man, proper from a friend, charitable from a divine,—full as much so (pardon the weakness of my judgement) as to keep charges of this kind in your own bosom for upwards of two years, and then to produce those charges for the first time, in the spirit and language of the bitterest reproach, not against the speaker of the words, but against a third person (myself), in order to aggravate accusations against *me*, which you have carried on

with much earnestness, though without any provocation, real or pretended.

My lord, there was no reason drawn from profession or temper, (I beg leave to say,) for your silence and your forbearance at that time, that does not, as strongly at least, subsist against your reproaches and your warmth at this. If you thought these conversations unadvised, it was a reason for advice; if you thought they argued depravity, it was a reason for rupture. Far from it. After, long after, any period you can assign for such supposed conversation, much intercourse has passed between Will. Burke and your lordship; and I do not remember that you have treated our common friend, at any time of our long acquaintance, with warmer demonstrations of affection; some of which, when you please, I will point out to your lordship's recollection. I therefore am obliged to conclude, that your lordship's memory has not done its office quite perfectly on this occasion; and that the discourses which passed so long ago, were of a different nature from what you consider them in the moment of your present zeal and warmth.

As to my brother, I am bound to do him justice at the very least. He is too near to me to make it decent for me to speak what I think of him, and which others would say with more propriety and with equal pleasure. I assure you, my lord, his majesty has not those who serve him in the highest, as he does in the lowest capacity, who are better affected to his government, or more capable of doing it honour or service. My lord, he heard with great astonishment, and some feeling, your lordship's criminal accusations, so heavy in the matter and unmanaged in the epithets. He would immediately have answered for himself, but I interposed, and took it into hands very equal to it, for it stands in no need of skill or ability. First, my lord, I must observe, as in the case of my kinsman, so in that of my brother, not one of the persons who make the charges upon me, do allege his conversations as the cause. This is your lordship's own,—peculiar

and appropriate. My lord, please to recollect, in the next place, that no *late* discourses of his could possibly give offence, or furnish ground for the late presumption against me; for the justification of which presumption your lordship has referred to those supposed discourses of his. He is but just returned to the kingdom, after an absence of two years. He was actually not returned to England at the time when this hue and cry of the court was raised against me. So far as to the late *presumed* public conversations; in which, my lord, it is simply,—not improbable,—but absolutely impossible he should have been the cause and ground of recent accusations against me.

But if your lordship supposes that the impropriety and publicity of conversations in former days, has made such an impression as to produce this effect at such a distance of time, be so good as to recollect the extreme improbability of the charge. A great part of the time he spent in England was, from a melancholy accident, passed in his bed or chair; some time he spent in Ireland. My lord, his acquaintance beyond my closest connexions is very limited. Who of those makes this charge upon him? Who is it that charges him, except your lordship? You, indeed, proceed against him in a manner, in which I do not so readily recognize your lordship's natural and usual generosity. You bring a charge upon him which, in your way of making it, it is impossible, in case of the most perfect innocence, that he should be able to refute. The charge (dropping the handsome epithet) is not for indecorum, or indiscretion, but for *falsehood*. The only defence, therefore (if the fact of the words were once admitted), would be to plead that the words were *true*. My lord, will you seriously say, that you would suffer him to allege any sort of proofs of the truth of such an assertion as you suppose? Would you not consider the very attempt to be a new offence;—would you not consider it as an offence ten times heavier than the first? Recollect that the informations for libels have lately been purged of the word *false*. This, if legally, was

very properly done; as the lawyers have been in a practice of not giving evidence to the falsehood, or admitting disculpatory testimony to the truth. I confess I should carefully imitate this proceeding of the lawyers, in my intercourse with mankind; and would think it very unjust and improper in me, to accuse any man with a departure from veracity, where his attempt to prove the truth would be more dangerous to him than his admitting the falsehood with which he stood charged. But, my lord, my brother puts himself on his defence, and does totally deny the fact. Who, out of your own family, was present at any such discourse, at any time? My brother never had the honour of being often in your lordship's company; when he was, he stood in some awe, though in no sort of fear of you. He has had very few political discourses with you, and never anything resembling a political dispute, but one. This was on your lordship's ending a conversation, of which I was (as I am now) the unhappy subject, with declaring that 'party operated to eradicate every virtue out of the heart of man'. On that occasion he grew into some warmth, and retorted on other factions some of the charges your lordship had made upon me. This, my lord, he never mentioned to me, until his necessary justification drew it from him. He proceeded to justify the propriety of oppositions by the principles of the revolution, in which he said they were founded. So far from blaming that glorious event, or its sound principles—he assumed them as the very ground of his argument. He asserts that he never had any other discourse with your lordship about the revolution. Consider, my lord, how easy it is, for a passionate recollection of a passionate debate, to confound matters strangely. Suppose, my lord, I was to say that the revolution could not be supported, if some lesser modes of opposition could not be also justified. My lord, I do say it,—but I say it upon paper. This, in conversations of years' standing, the hearer might forget to have been an hypothetical proposition. The little piddling monosyllable 'if'

might slip out of the memory, and the thing stand in all the glare of a criminal offence ;—so dangerous it is to mention such things without their necessary adjuncts,—the time, the occasion, the posture of the debate, the purpose of the speaker ;—so dangerous, after a long time past, to mention them at all, in a style of accusation or reproach.

Supposing some impropriety in my brother's language, with regard to the persons in power ; I must beg leave to observe, that being uttered only to yourself, very vulgar generosity would as easily pardon the natural warmth of a brother, as I do from my soul, and most unaffectedly, forgive the reflection on me which gave occasion to that warmth in him. At any rate, this imprudence never went beyond the very inside of your own family. Both my friends, however, do insist upon it, that such discourses as your lordship supposes, may not be confounded with strong censures upon what are sometimes, though with great impropriety, called the king's measures. However, it is the only comfort they have, if your lordship persists in the charge, that you charge them with nothing in which by your lordship's own account, they are not involved with the very best of men, and best affected subjects his majesty can boast of.

With regard to these discourses of my brother and my friend, you say you ' have done all you could ; you did not publish them.' I am always fond of doing justice to your lordship's actions ; you did very rightly and wisely. If your lordship takes the word ' publishing ' in the vulgar sense, for making generally known, be pleased to reflect, if your lordship's idea be founded, that they themselves held these discourses, and very publicly, in other places (as you infer by an argument *a fortiori* from their private conversation in your house) ; then, my lord, your publication of what they said to you, would be the most idle and superfluous piece of zeal in the world. They have saved you the invidious and unpleasant task of revealing private conversation. If your lordship means by ' publication '

(as the lawyers sometimes do) any communication, and would apply it, as a discovery, to persons in power, it would be a proceeding, I am sure, wholly shocking to the nobleness of your nature, to make any charge where, by the circumstances, it is impossible to oppose to it any kind of defence. But if you meant by publication, a denunciation as a matter criminal, your lordship must have, while our laws stand in vigour, quite other sort of matter and other sort of proof, I assure you, than I think you could possibly bring on the occasion.

Whilst I do justice to the rectitude of your conduct, I cannot acknowledge it as anything of favour, kindness, or friendship; and, therefore, only wish you had not said 'you had done all you could', for you could do nothing else in common sense and common justice.

Almost every word in the last page but one of your letter, carries a sting with it. You charge my friends with . . .

:        :        :        :        :        :

This is all full of various, odd, and complicated charges and insinuations, but all conveying matter of invidious, and, to us, most dangerous reflection, easily understood in the gross, though hard enough to be developed into the particulars. However, my lord, my desire of giving complete satisfaction to your lordship and to justice, induces me to bring it into distinctness as well as I am able.

By the discourses which your lordship holds to be so obnoxious and imprudent, I must suppose your lordship must mean, that my friends have, at some time or other, thrown out some very severe strictures on the memory of those princes who have so long since demised. I am compelled, whether I will or no, to think this the gist of the accusation, because some gentlemen who have been considered, I know not how justly, as professed and very public advocates and

<sup>1</sup> The draft is here defective.

admirers of that illustrious family, have had no sort of reason to think their persons to be obnoxious, or their discourses to be imprudent. Nay, some who were so attached to that family, as to hold close connexions with such as pretended, however falsely, to belong to it, have had no reason to repent of this their close connexion and enthusiastic attachment. I will not say, my lord, that my friends may not, in argument, where they thought things swayed too much to that side, have spoken rather disrespectfully (but they thought safely) of a king one hundred years dead; and others have heard them do it. People will say many things in argument, and when they are provoked by what they think extravagant notions of their adversaries. Nay, it is not uncommon, when men are got into debates, to take now one side, now another, of a question, as the momentary humour of the man and the occasion called for, with all the latitude that the antiquated freedom and ease of English conversation among friends did, in former days, encourage and excuse; and, indeed, in speaking to your lordship, they thought themselves, I dare say, equally safe, whether they commended or blamed any part, or all, of that individual family. As to me, my lord, on whom the light thrown on my friends is brought to reflect with undiminished lustre, I assure you that I have always spoken and thought on that subject, with all that perfect calmness which belongs to it. My passions are not to be roused, either on the side of partiality, or on that of hatred, by those who lie in their cold lead, quiet and innoxious, in the chapel of Henry, or the churches of Windsor Castle or La Trappe. *Quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis atque Latina.* My opinion of the truth or falsehood of facts related in history, is formed on the common rules of criticism; my opinion of characters, on those rules and the common principles of morality. I have no side in these matters, as your lordship has a little invidiously put it; but I will always speak what I think, without caring one farthing what is the *bon ton* upon the subject, either at court

or in coffee-houses, until all honest freedom of disquisition, and all manly liberty of speech, shall, by legal or other power, be conclusively put an end to. Good reasons may exist for such a restraint, and perhaps we are at the eve of it; but until the time does actually arrive, I shall cherish and cultivate in myself and those I love, a *decent* freedom of speech in public, *all* freedom of speech among confidential friends, where other principles than those of decorum are the lawgivers. To this freedom, your lordship's friends the ancients (in a language you understand much better than I do) gave an honourable name, and classed it among the virtues. But whether a *virtue*, or only an *enjoyment*, I assure your lordship that neither courts nor town halls, with all they could give of gold boxes or pensions, would indemnify me for the want of an hour's use of it. You tell me that these historical discussions 'are usually held the tests of principles'. Possibly they may. I, however, do not apprehend that I am responsible for the opinions of the vulgar, till I adopt them. My lord, I have not learned my public principles in any such wild, unsystematic, and preposterous a mode. I have taken them from quite other sources than those of Mr. Carte or M. Rapin de Thoyras. My principles enable me to form my judgment upon men and actions in history, just as they do in common life, and are not formed out of events and characters, either present or past. History is a preceptor of prudence, not of principles. The principles of true politics are those of morality enlarged; and I neither now do, nor ever will, admit of any other.

But when your lordship speaks of tests of public principles, there is one which you have not mentioned, but which, let me say, is far above them all;—the actions and conduct of men. Let mine, and those of my friends, speak for our public principles. If the last six years are not enough, let us be on our trial for six more. That, indeed, is in the hands of Providence, not in ours. But I trust that He who has made honest fame a lawful object of prayer and pursuit, and the

possession of it to stand second in the order of his blessings, will give us means and will to live down all charges and aspersions. The principles that guide us in public and in private, as they are not of our devising, but moulded into the nature and essence of things, will endure with the sun and moon,—long, very long after Whig and Tory, Stuart and Brunswick, and all such miserable bubbles and playthings of the hour, are vanished from existence and from memory. My friends and myself may sink into errors, and even into considerable faults; but I trust that these principles will buoy us up again, so that we shall have something to set against our imperfections, and stand with the world, at least, not as the worst men or the worst citizens of our day.

My lord,—in charging us with indiscretion, together with the word ‘Stuarts’ you have coupled *the revolution*. If I were to guess at a charge of indiscretion from the credit and fortunes of men, I should on this occasion suppose we had spoken too favourably of that event. But do you mean the contrary,—and, under this and the foregoing words, seriously intend to insinuate a charge of Jacobitism? Then, be it so. I am afraid that our enemies, who do not allow us *common* virtues, will hardly agree with you in giving us the credit of so amazing and *supernatural* a fidelity; that, at the expense of fame and fortune, and everything dear to man, we should choose to be attached to a person when he is deserted by the whole world and by himself,—when he has not (as I am told,) so much as a single Scotch, English, or Irish footman about him. Truly, we never were so wonderfully dazzled with the splendour of actual royalty, as to be captivated with what is not even the shadow of it, nor ever was so in my time. If you mean that not our *attachments* but our *principles* are of that sort,—favourable to arbitrary power,—truly, in our present connexions, we have brought those principles to the very worst imaginable market; when the very best, in common opinion, was directly open before us. We

have built our Chalcedon, with the chosen part of the universe full in our prospect. But, my lord, I must again attribute these reflections to an over-warmth in your temper, or an error in your memory, or to both. My brother, my friend, and myself, never have for a moment thought other of the revolution, than as of an act, just, necessary, and honourable to this nation, whose liberty and prosperity it has ensured to this time,—and will for ages, if its true principles be well adhered to. Your lordship is more indulgent than we wish. I cannot admit that men have a liberty of taking, seriously and dogmatically, what side they please in this question. I do not mean in this, or in anything, to abridge any man's private liberty; but I am sure, that man is not safely placed in any weighty public trust in this kingdom, who thinks of the revolution in any other manner than that which I have mentioned.

This is no matter of historical criticism,—it is a moral conclusion, on an undisputed fact. A man who condemns the revolution, has no longer any obnoxious persons to hang his principles on, and, therefore, he and they may be made but too convenient to the executive powers of the time;—but, for this reason, he is much more dangerous than formerly to the constitution and liberties of his country. Let me add further, that a man who praises the *fact* of the revolution, and abandons its *principles*,—substituting the *instrumental* persons and establishments consequential to that event, in the place of its *ends*, is as bad as the former. To me, indeed, he seems to be infinitely worse, as he can have no sound moral principles of any kind, nor be a fit servant for honest government in any mode whatever. The one has *lost* his attachment, the last has *deserted* his principles; and the last is, by far, the most culpable and the most dangerous. These are, and always were, my sentiments and expressions on the revolution, drawn from principles of public law and natural justice, well spun and firmly wove together, not patched out of parti-coloured rags,

picked from the filthy dunghills of old women's superstitions and children's credulity,—not from Fuller's warming-pan, or Oates's plot,—Ferguson's manifesto, or Manwaring's massacre,—no, nor from the paltry memoirs of that age, which I would as soon take for its history, as I would take the authority of *The Whisperer*<sup>1</sup> for the events of this reign, or that of the pensioners of the present court for the character of King George the Second.

I say nothing of Will. Burke's early habits,—you know them. If I were to mention those of my brother, his education, not so learned as yours, had been however, at least as much, in the utmost severity of Whig principles; but I say nothing of that infused education which is as nothing. We came both of us pretty early into our own hands, and our principles are of our own putting together. Those who do not like them, will have nothing to do with any of us. I thought, however, that we had, in the main, the same principles with those of your lordship, and that this similarity in the great lines was one of the grounds of your former kindness.

I have spoken fully to the first part of the series of charges, on the principles of my friends, which are mine also. You mention at the end of the roll of obnoxious tenets, which my friends were so indiscreet as to utter in your company, in former times, the Irish rebellion, by which I suppose you mean the great rebellion of 1641. I all along suspected that your lordship had mistaken *my* discourses with you, for those of *my friends*. This convinces me of it. Will. Burke, or my brother, most certainly never have spoken to you on the subject. They know little or nothing of the Irish history. They have never thought on it at all. I have studied it with more care than is common. I have spoken to you on the subject, I dare say, twenty times. This mustard-bowl is *my* thunder. 'Me—Me—adsum qui feci: nihil ille nec ausus nec potuit.' Indeed, I *have* my opinion on that part of history, which I have

<sup>1</sup> A scurrilous publication of the day.

often delivered to you,—to every one I have conversed with on the subject, and which I mean still to deliver, whenever the occasion calls for it, which is—that the Irish rebellion of 1641 was not only (as our silly things called ‘ histories ’ call it) not utterly *unprovoked*, but that no history I have ever read, furnishes an instance of any that was so *provoked*; and that in almost all parts of it, it has been extremely and most absurdly misrepresented.

I assure you I am not single in that opinion. Several now living think so. The late Mr. Yorke thought so, and expressed himself so in debate in the House of Commons, on the *nullum tempus* Bill, as well as to myself in conversation. I really thought our history of Ireland so terribly defective, that I did, and with success, urge a very learned and ingenious friend<sup>1</sup> of yours and mine, in the university of Dublin, to undertake it. I dare say he will do it ably and faithfully; but if he thinks that anything unfavourable to his principles will be deduced from telling the truth, or cares for vulgar malignity on that occasion, he is much more below the task than I can prevail on myself to think him. As to my *principles* on this subject, I must leave them to your mercy. I have told you what I know to be true in *fact*. If I were to reason on that event, and to affirm it justifiable, you might say I showed myself a friend to rebellion. If I blamed it, you might say I was attached to the doctrines of passive obedience. This is an ugly dilemma. I don’t remember to have said either the one or the other; but if people must make a conclusion concerning my character from what I did do, and shall say, on this subject, all that in charity and decency they *ought* to conclude is, that I am no lover of oppression, nor believer in malignant fables; what they *will* conclude, is their affair, not mine. This was necessary to bring this charge, and, indeed, all the others, from my friends to the true object,—myself.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Leland.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO WM. DOWDESWELL, ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, October 27, 1772.*

MY DEAR DOWDESWELL,

Since I received your letter, I have done all in my power to arrange myself for a journey to Pull Court. I find it impossible. I must therefore content myself with giving you a short, and, I fear, a very imperfect sketch of the state of affairs, so far as it has come to my knowledge. I took it for granted, that you had seen Lord Rockingham in his progress northwards, or I certainly would have written to you long before this. I know Lord Rockingham expected to meet you at Harrowden. By the turn of your letter I must presume that he was disappointed.

The East India business is the principal cause of calling Parliament together before Christmas. Whether foreign politics furnish any additional reasons for this early meeting, I know not. Things both at home and abroad are in a critical situation. The East India Company, without any diminution, even with a considerable increase of their trade, are not solvent. They owe eight hundred thousand pounds to the bank. In the present state of credit this money is wanted; and the directors of this latter company would be very clamorous and troublesome, if they were not quieted by a persuasion that Government would do something to enable the East India Company to discharge this enormous debt, which is double the amount of the ordinary annual transaction between the two companies. In the last direction, when Mr. Purling was in the chair, the court accepted drafts from their servants in India that exceed a million. These drafts were, in their quantity, beyond all reason; and in their mode and principle, were in direct opposition to the orders which had been repeatedly given to the presidencies abroad. The drafts were chiefly for expenses incurred for building and fortifications. They ought most undoubtedly not to have been accepted, if the

court of directors, or at least those in the department of treasury, had done their duty. Colebrooke values himself upon his freedom from any share in this unjustifiable acceptance, the chief cause of the difficulty that now embarrasses the company. The tea-agreement is now at its winding up, and has added some hundreds of thousands to the debt. It was certainly a most improvident bargain. The directors have had three schemes in contemplation. One, to increase their capital: a second, to borrow a million upon bonds: the third, that Government this year, instead of the discharge of other debts, would pay off £1,200,000, of what it owes to the company. This last scheme, some of them think, with time given for the tea-composition, and a reduction of about four per cent. dividend, would enable the company to go on until a reform of their affairs abroad can be effected by means of the supervision, or by some other method. This seems to be the scheme most approved by the chairs. Others, with more resolution, and to all appearance with more sense, propose to reduce their dividend to six per cent., and thus to exonerate themselves at one stroke of the charge of four hundred thousand pounds, into which they had been tricked by the court. Then they would stand upon equal terms with administration; and as their whole chance of getting anything would depend upon relieving the company, the company might prescribe, instead of receiving, the terms of the agreement. Take what course they will, the difficulties will be very great. You will ask what the Treasury has been doing all this time. While Lord North was in the country, his correspondence with the company was amicable, and in the style of mutual accommodation. But soon after his arrival in town, his manner was extremely altered. He promised an answer to the propositions of the court of directors in a week. Three weeks are elapsed, and there is no answer. Papers are daily ordered by the Treasury from the India House; and by their nature, they seem to be materials provided for an attack upon the company. In the meantime, the language of the

court-runners is to the last degree hostile to that body. I am told Lord Mansfield declares publicly, that the company is unequal to the magnitude of its circumstances; that the Crown ought to resume the powers of peace and war granted to them, and reduce the company to a mere trading corporation. Next to the grand object of the destruction of Wilkes, the leading object in the politics of the court is, to seize upon the East India patronage of offices. In this hopeful scheme they will be joined, in a manner, by the whole nation. Their grand difficulty is in the object itself, not in getting Parliament to concur in any act of violence. To the attainment of their end, mere despotic violence is not sufficient, or they would have attained it long ago. How Lord North will appear before the House, after suffering five years to elapse, without doing anything to enable the company to keep its agreement with Government, if they were deficient in power, or to compel them if they were fraudulent, or to release them if they were not in circumstances, I cannot guess;—other than that he is conscious he appears before a tribunal, where he is always to be acquitted, and the rest of the world always to be condemned.

I hear of nothing else with which the Ministry mean to entertain their friends at the meeting. Lord Rockingham wrote lately to Keppel. He seemed strongly disposed to think, that to the Ministry and their friends the business ought to be left, and that we ought to be in no haste to go to the meeting. The Duke of Richmond is of that opinion; and, indeed, as far as my poor sentiments go, I concur with them most heartily. I am tired of hearing, as an answer to all argument,—‘You want our places.’ The determined majority within doors, which, supporting no minister, is blindly devoted to the court,—the treachery of our allies in opposition, and the unsystematic conduct of many of our friends, otherwise excellent and sensible men, makes the situation of active persons on our side of the question very humiliating and vexatious. Abroad,—things are not a jot better. The people have fallen into

a total indifference to any matters of public concern. I do not suppose that there was ever anything like this stupor in any period of our history. In this condition there is no dignity in carrying on a teasing and vexatious sort of debate, without any other effect than pelting ministers now and then, and keeping honest gentlemen from their dinners, while we make trifling and ineffectual divisions in the House, and the nation quietly acquiesces in those measures which we agitate with so much eagerness. When opposition has not some sort of correspondence with the feelings of the people at large, it only looks like personal discontent. This is the case at present ; and it is very absurd in us, who sacrifice everything to character, to give ourselves much trouble when our efforts are no longer seconded by the public sense ; and when all our labour tends only to lower that character for which we have contended. If anything can rouse the people to a sense of their situation, it is your absenting yourselves from business. To attend the House on great questions without saying anything upon them, may not always be easy, nor even safe. It may admit disagreeable constructions. Absence from those questions will scarcely admit of more than one construction, and that the true one. This mode of absence will have a better effect than a *secession*, (the time for which is past,) because, as you are not bound to anything, you may resume your attendance whenever the situation of things shall make an attendance advisable. Everything will, however, depend in this, as in all things, upon concert. The more I consider our circumstances, and the nature of the business which the House is to be engaged in, the fonder I grow of Lord Rockingham's measure, which appears to me politic, sober, and manly ; but, observe, that I am not apt to be long fond of anything which you do not thoroughly approve. We have not often differed hitherto, and I will take care that we shall differ as little in time to come. Think of this business,—communicate with Lord Rockingham upon it, and let there be a settled parole for our friends

by the middle of next month. You know, that if you and Lord Rockingham should, on consultation, adopt a plan of more activity,—why, I am ready, and will certainly follow wherever you lead me. Our principles are the same, and it is of little consequence in what manner we conduct the campaign, when we are morally sure of being defeated. All we can do is to save our honour.

Pray let me hear from you, provided you cannot let me see you pretty soon. You will now think of quitting the country. I hope you do not forget that this place is not five miles from your road. Will. Burke gives you many thanks for your obliging invitation, but bids me tell you that nothing, except its being necessary to make you Chancellor of the Exchequer, could prevail on him to take such a journey on horseback. Adieu! and believe me with the greatest sincerity and affection, dear Dowdeswell,

Your most faithful friend, and obedient servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO WILLIAM DOWDESWELL, ESQ.

*Broad Sanctuary, November 7, 1772.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I received your packet here, in town, where some business called me a few days ago. and where it still detains me. Your servant waits at Beaconsfield for my answer; I could not dispatch him a moment earlier. Sir G. Savile is in town; I took your paper to him last night. His nephew, Lord Lumley, was just preparing to set out for France, and we were not able to read over what you sent with any attention until this morning about eleven o'clock; other matters unavoidably engaged me for the remainder of the day; so that it is near nine in the evening before I am able to sit down to thank you for your ample and satisfactory communication of your sentiments, on the very delicate situation in which we stand, and the very important and difficult business we have before us. You do not write on the

subject like one who has not been used for some time to consider it ; at least, your fallow adds to your fertility ; for I am of Sir G. Savile's mind, who thinks your paper one of the ablest discussions of a public matter that he has ever read. I have not time to give you the detail of our conversation ; in many points he concurs heartily with you. In India politics, you know he has opinions of his own, and in consequence declines taking any active part in that business.

I see as we proceed in the discussion of the nice and complex matter that makes the subject of your paper, that it will be absolutely impracticable to arrive at any fixed determination without a personal interview. At this time of the year, it cannot be either at Pull Court or at Wentworth. Harrowden is more central, and there Lord Rockingham might, without material inconvenience to any of them, collect the greatest part of his confidential friends. Whether you meet there, or not, it is clearly necessary that you should be both in town, in order to give weight to the final resolution you shall take, and to procure a general and timely communication to all your friends. Pressed as I am in time, forgive a hasty observation or two, on the subject of your letter. I have no leisure to send you anything regular or digested. In the main, I have the satisfaction of going along with you, in most of your reasonings. I believe that a great deal of the difference in opinion concerning the plan of non-attendance in this session, which prevails among Lord Rockingham's friends, has arisen from our not exactly understanding one another on the *extent* of the measure, and the *motives* for proposing it. It is not suggested from choice. It is upon the idea that nothing can be attempted in Parliament, with any hope of success ; and that the people without doors are cold and unconcerned in the contest which is carried on between us and the ministers. If either of these fail in fact, the measure is taken up on mistaken principles. If both considerations are founded, then it is to be shown what else it is that promises better

Without all question, if this absence should appear the result of a supine indolence and neglect of duty, it must have the worst effect imaginable upon our character. If it cannot be made expressive of the strongest and most indignant feeling and resentment, of the whole train of conduct adopted by the majority of the two Houses, it were better to continue our tiresome attendance, our fruitless debates, and our feeble divisions for six years to come, in the manner we have dragged through them for the six years that are past. But I have not yet been able to persuade myself, that your absence from Parliament at the opening of the next session can pass by without making a strong impression on the public. Your character for diligence will not permit your absence to be thought the effect of inactivity; your known integrity would render every imputation of corruption ridiculous; and your number, weight, and consequence, would necessarily incite an inquiry into your reasons for a procedure so contrary to the usual tenor of your conduct. The Ministry and their partisans may be depended upon for an attack on you; and this attack calling for an explanation, you will lay your reasons before the public with more grace, and probably with better effect than if they appeared previous to the step you had taken. It is always imprudent to suffer the previous public agitation of any measure that you are resolved to pursue: better take it first, and pledge your *people* for its subsequent justification. This is my idea of the *spirit* of the non-attendance proposed by Lord Rockingham and the Duke of Richmond. I concurred in it most heartily: not without a sense of the inconveniences which may attend it, but considering it as the only thing which remained for us to do. We have tried everything else.

With regard to the *extent* of the plan, I never understood it to amount to a total secession; and in this particular I think I have the happiness of approaching very near to some of your ideas. The absence, I thought, would be proper on their speech and address,

and upon those points which are generally considered as the measures of Government, and to which we are morally certain that the House is mortgaged to the court. The attendance upon other points will mark the distinction we mean to keep in view the more strongly.

There is another point which you rather agitate (I imagine) than directly propose ; that of an *absolute secession*, and upon some *definite measure*. In this matter I have some difficulties. I do not look upon such a secession, upon any proposition now probably in view, to be at all practicable, because it supposes the existence of that very spirit which we want, and which, by the proposed step, we wish to excite. Our people who now hesitate upon a limited plan of absence, will never be brought to hear of an absolute retreat. Such a secession leaves us without a power of returning with any sort of decency, let opportunities invite, or circumstances demand it, never so strongly. I should, besides, very much doubt whether any merely political question, such as the convention in Sir Robert Walpole's time, or the compromise about Falkland's Islands which happened in our own, (even supposing them the worst in their kind,) no, nor hardly any prodigal grant to the Crown, can justify a secession from Parliament ; and though we should take that occasion to review former matters of grievance, and to make the whole an accumulated charge on the majority, certainly nothing in that mass would be much attended to, but that which was the immediate occasion of the breach ; and in spite of anything we could do to the contrary, the whole would be tried upon that single issue. Nothing can to my ideas make that formal, general, instantaneous secession proper, but some direct act which shakes a fundamental part of the constitution ; and that, too, immediately and visibly. Such an act has been done, but we have very unfortunately, I think, let pass the time for making any effectual use of it. The mode proposed seems well suited to that profession of despair, which does not arise from the resentment

of a single act, but of a series of conduct of a dangerous and unconstitutional tendency. It does not seem to me to be attended with the mischievous futility of a middle measure. It has strength sufficient for its magnitude. Everything which I say, in favour of this partial secession, is upon the presumption that the concurrence in it will be general. If this should not be the case, I very readily admit, nothing worse can be thought of. I join with you, too, in the absolute necessity of Lord Rockingham's being in town, if his health will at all admit it. I do not forget the disarray and confusion we were in upon the business of the Jury Bill.

You seem to think that foreign affairs make a principal part of the reasons of the court for calling us together before Christmas. As a speculation on the state of those affairs, you seem to be well-grounded in that supposition; but I can find nothing, in the discourse of those who disperse the court-word before the opening of the session, to support it. I doubt much whether they are yet come to anything like a resolution on that subject.

With regard to the East India difficulties, they most certainly enter largely into our business. When I thought of the reduction of dividend, as a means for their immediate relief, I considered it not as a compulsory measure by authority of Parliament, but as an act of their own; necessary, as I conceived, for disengaging them from the Ministry, and treating upon terms something more approaching to equality. But you have entirely satisfied me, that if the courtiers have a deeper and more regular design, than at this instant they profess, upon the company, the fall of stock will infinitely facilitate their project; and that this reduction of dividend will have such an effect upon the stock is indisputable. On the whole, I can scarcely conceive a more delicate part than we have to act in this business. By an unhappy and rare conjunction of circumstances, the designs of the court coincide exactly with the frenzy of the people. The

greater number of those who form an opposition, naturally take the colour of their opinions from the latter; so that the management of your friends becomes a matter of, at least, as much difficulty as the opposition to the enemy. You remark very rightly on the conduct of all parties in the East India Company upon the question of last year's committee, and on their behaviour in that committee. I agree with you, that without their own vigorous and unanimous efforts in their own cause, our endeavours will be of no service. In their present situation, nothing is more certain than that they will make no such efforts. They are divided into the most rancorous factions. None of them mean, (I am persuaded,) to make a direct sacrifice of the trust they have, in so large a part, of the rights as well as the properties of the subjects; but their mutual blind passions and resentments will make them do it without intending it; and the strong distress of their affairs has so frightened the body of the proprietors for their present and future dividends, that they are the less attentive to the preservation of their privileges of a higher order. They have no leader of ability, foresight, and honesty sufficient to state to them, in their general courts, the real politics of their situation. Sir G. Colebrooke is not in our hands, nor has he ever consulted with Lord Rockingham or any of his friends, upon one step which he has taken, or which he is to take. You have heard that he offered me the first place in a supervisorship of three, with great concurrence of the whole body of direction. I did not think it then right to accept the offer; yet after such a mark of confidence, you might imagine that nothing, at least of parliamentary use, would be kept from me; but the fact is, that he has acquainted me with nothing. He is shy and reserved; and while he has complied with the requisitions of the Treasury, at least as extensively as he ought, he has not communicated a single paper to me. It is true he did not refuse to send me copies of such papers as I should desire; but he showed so little willingness in the business, that I have not yet thought

fit to trouble him. I will see him before you come to town, and will collect either from him or from some others, such matter as may lead us better into the detail of their affairs. Without such instruction, without better support from the company, and without a total change in the sentiments of almost all our friends, the absence from Parliament, which I think proper for the whole, will be absolutely necessary with regard to us. It is impossible for me to enter at large with you into all the matters you have discussed in your very masterly paper. You have my full powers to decide for me as you please. When I see you, which I hope and request may be as soon as you can, I may learn more facts. I would say a great deal more, but I am hourly called away by the business that brought me to town. Pray urge Lord Rockingham to come to town; all depends upon it. I send you back your observations, with a note or two of Sir G. Savile's upon them. I have no copy of your paper, and lest yourself should have none, I send it back to you; but would very much wish to have a copy sent to me for the Duke of Richmond's use, and the satisfaction of some other friends. To conclude, let me again and again entreat that we may not be left at the opening of the session without a leader, or the least idea of a plan of conduct. The time gives you very little leisure for deliberation.

I am, my dear sir,

Ever faithfully yours,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Broad Sanctuary, November 11, 1772.*

MY DEAR LORD,

By this time you have received the whole of Mr. Dowdeswell's thoughts and correspondence, on the subject of your lordship's proposition. I confess, on the

very first suggestion, I entered into it with great good liking : but one condition always attended my approbation ; that is, the unanimous, cheerful, and zealous concurrence of all your lordship's friends. If the plan were by them unanimously adopted, manfully avowed, and resolutely adhered to, I do not entertain the slightest doubt that it would come up to the most sanguine expectations. But I find so little concurrence, that it seems to me the last degree of imprudence, in such a diversity of opinion, to hazard a measure, the whole effect of which depends upon unanimity. I thought it a mark of confidence that was proper, to show your lordship's letter to Lord G. Germain. He argued much, and truly not without cogency upon the subject. He looked upon a concurrence even of your lordship's particular friends, in any plan of non-attendance, as a thing absolutely impracticable. He did not think that we are strong enough, either in numbers or popularity ; or that there is enough of discontent among the people without doors to give the measure any sort of effect. He apprehends that we might rather run the risk of being forgotten by the public, than of exciting in them the spirit that we wish to raise. Besides that, there are so many other persons in opposition, not only unconnected, but extremely adverse, who would not fail to take advantage of our secession (however qualified) to succeed to our situations, and to accuse us of having meanly relinquished them, that we can never propose it with any hope either of credit or advantage. He was very sure, that neither of the Townshends, the father or the son, would enter into it ; as contrary to the opinions of both, and to all the feelings of the younger and more active of the two. I told him that your lordship (as he might, indeed, see by your letter) entertained the idea only as a matter to be considered. The fact is, Mr. Dowdeswell's idea of absence does not go to above a fortnight. Sir G. Savile is very doubtful ; Sir Charles Saunders and Lord F. Cavendish disapprove. Your lordship's northern friends are generally adverse, and none of

them earnest for it ; so that the proposition, as far as the sense of your lordship's friends can be collected, is, upon the whole, disliked. Lord George Germain seems rather to approve of our course during the last session, where we lay by until fair opportunity of opposition offered ; but that our attendance, though inactive, ought to be regular, in order to show that, though we may be silent, we are nevertheless vigilant. I am persuaded that we cannot follow any plan of this kind in the approaching session. They will, because they must, lay something immediately before us, and we must immediately take our part in it. But nothing can be done without your lordship's early appearance in town, ten days at least before the meeting. This wish and opinion of mine is always in subordination to the care of your lordship's health, which is, and ought to be, our first consideration.

The ministers, I believe, have nothing very precisely determined with relation to Indian affairs. I am told, and I do not think it wholly improbable from many circumstances, that Lord North was against our meeting before Christmas, but that Lord Mansfield urged on the early summons. Notwithstanding Lord North's procrastinating disposition, he must do something with regard to the company's insolvency. He must, I think, accept of one, or other, of their propositions. Mr. Dowdeswell inclines to the scheme of the company's receiving the debt from Government, as the most eligible measure, and is, by all means, for keeping up the dividend. His reasons are certainly cogent, but, as yet, we have the matter very imperfectly before us.

I saw a letter to Sir Charles Saunders from Sir Charles Knowles. He speaks of the conclusion of peace between Turkey and Russia as almost certain, and this will probably draw with it some sort of pacification of Poland, and may thereby ensure the continuance of peace in the rest of Europe, for some time longer. I cannot find that foreign affairs are intended to form any part of our business at the meeting. If your lordship gives me notice when you will be at Harrowden,

I shall be glad to wait upon you there, but, indeed, I had much rather meet you in London. I am, with my best respects to Lady Rockingham,

My dear lord, ever your lordship's most  
obliged and obedient humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

I hear that Charles Fox's speedy coming into the Treasury is expected. This event would not, I hope, prove sinister to a very just claim;<sup>1</sup> and would prevent much oppression to individuals, and, I am quite certain, a very considerable loss to the public.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF  
RICHMOND

*November 17, 1772.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I am much obliged to your grace for your very kind letter of the 15th, which I received by the machine. Whatever others might have imagined, I never thought your grace too tenacious of your opinions. If you had rather leaned to that extreme, I should not have esteemed you the less for it. I have seen so many woful examples of the effect of levity, both that which arises from temper and that which is owing to interest, that a small degree of obstinacy is a quality not very odious in my eyes, whether it be complexional, or from principle. When a man makes great sacrifices to his honest opinion, it is no wonder that he should grow fond of it. I am sure that nothing can hinder public spirit from being very suspicious, except great consistency. Those who do not much admire the security itself, nor perhaps the virtue it secures, will represent it as a mask, and perhaps the virtue as an obstinate and intractable disposition. Those who think in that manner of your grace, form that opinion on your steady attachment to your principles. They know nothing of your compliance and practicability, in

<sup>1</sup> A claim of Richard Burke's to some land in Grenada.

carrying on business among your friends. I can bear witness that it has always been full as much as was necessary towards keeping a great system well compacted together in all its parts. I have known some good effects of that practicability. I agree, too, that there have been instances where we may now have reason to wish you had less facility. After all, every political question that I have ever known, has had so much of the *pro* and *con* in it, that nothing but the success could decide which proposition ought to have been adopted. People in a constant minority can have no success, and therefore, have not even that uncertain way of solving any problem of political conduct. I believe we have had more divisions among ourselves than we ought to have had, and have made many mistakes in our conduct, both as a body and as individuals. Comparing our proceedings with any abstract standard, we have been very faulty and imperfect; but if you try yourselves by a comparison with any other existing body of men, I believe you will find a more decent, regular, consistent, and prudent series of proceeding among yourselves, than among any of them, or all of them put together. Have you in any place where you have had an interest undone yourselves so completely, as a certain party which was lately in possession of the corporation of London? a set of gentlemen who cannot plead innocence and simplicity as an excuse for their innumerable blunders. In the House of Lords, have the chiefs of you ever framed such injudicious motions, paid so little attention to your mutual honour, or contrived to reconcile your proceedings at one time to your declarations at another, with so little *finesse* and dexterity as some persons of very high name in this country? You have not, like them, while they were miserably distracted among themselves, formed a thousand childish and mischievous plots, to break to pieces the only people who could possibly serve them, and in whom, if they had common sense, they would, for their own sakes, have placed great confidence, as well as have endea-

voured to acquire the like from them, by every method of fair and conciliatory conduct. If you turn from them to the factions that make what is called administration, surely you are guiltless of that tissue of absurdities by which Government, that by mere abuses can hardly be more than odious, has been rendered the most contemptible thing in the world. Look at home,—one has much to complain of. Look abroad,—one has ten times more. So that on the whole, I am inclined to think that the faults in your body are no more than the ordinary frailties of human nature ; some of them, too, inseparably attached to the cause of all your strength and reputation. You are, in general, somewhat languid, scrupulous, and unsystematic ; but men of high birth and great property are rarely as enterprising as others, and for reasons that are very natural. Men of integrity are curious, sometimes too curious, in the choice of means ; and great bodies can seldom be brought to system and discipline, except by instruments that, while you are out of Government, you have not in your power. However, with all these faults, it is better you should be rich, and honest, and numerous, than needy and profligate, and composed of a few desperate politicians ; though they have advantages in their own way, which you must always want. It is with such reflections I compose and comfort myself, in the occasional dejections and vexations that I am subject to like other men, and which your grace has seen but too much of ; and they will in my cool moments always put me at ease, and reconcile me to everything you do, as long as I can act in public, whether I agree in opinion with the rest of you, or not.

As to your grace's situation in the party and in the world, it would be the greatest injustice to Lord Rockingham, not to say that he sees and feels his obligations to you in their full extent, and has often spoke, as he ought, of the unparalleled part you have acted. His nearest and oldest friends are, much in the same degree, your own. There can be but one opinion on your conduct and abilities. With regard to others,

your grace is very sensible that you have not made your court to the world, by forming yourself to a flattering exterior ; but you put me in mind of Mr. Wilkes's observation when he makes love, that he will engage in such a pursuit against the handsomest fellow in England, and only desires a month's start of his rival on account of his face. Your month is past ; and if your grace does not, every one else does remark, how much you grow on the public, by the exertion of real talent and substantial virtue. You know you have already some fruits of them, and you will gather in such fruits every day, until your barns are full as they can hold. One thing, and but one, I see against it, which is, that your grace dissipates your mind into too great a variety of minute pursuits, all of which, from the natural vehemence of your temper, you follow with almost equal passion. It is wise, indeed, considering the many positive vexations, and the innumerable bitter disappointments of pleasure in the world, to have as many resources of satisfaction as possible within one's power. Whenever we concentrate the mind on one sole object, that object and life itself must go together. But though it is right to have reserves of employment, still some one object must be kept principal ; greatly and eminently so ; and the other masses and figures must preserve their due subordination, to make out the grand composition of an important life. Upon these sound principles, which your grace would require in some of those arts that you protect, your public business, with all its discouragements and mortifications, ought to be so much the principal figure with you, that the rest, in comparison of it, should be next to nothing ; and even in that principal figure of public life, it will be necessary to avoid the exquisiteness of an over-attention to small parts ; and to over-precision, and to a spirit of detail, which acute understandings, and which, without great care, all precise reasoners are apt to get into ; and which gives, in some degree, a sort of hardness, and what you connoisseurs call the dry manner, to

all our actions. Your grace has abundant reason not to be discouraged from the great exhibition that I wish to see you chiefly intent upon. In the course of public business, by degrees, your grace develops your true character. You would be in a bad condition, if, with the doors shut after the manner of the French, but on the principle of the English constitution, you were to be tried only by your peers. But this is not so ; business, by degrees, brings various kinds and descriptions of men into contact with you ; and they all go off with the best impressions, and communicate them to the world. Why have I rambled thus far ? Why, truly, because it became an amusement to my mind ; and that I see your grace wants some amusement too. But is the indulgence of a loquacious vein any amusement ? I will try by going on further. I agree with your grace, that our condition is very bad. It is certainly so. It can be concealed, neither from friends nor enemies. The time for secession is past, and no other such opportunity is in prospect. It would have done, I am persuaded ; but none of our friends are to blame for this rejection of that idea. On the first proposal, Lord Temple, Lord Lyttelton, and Lord Camden showed such invincible repugnance to it, that in your then situation it could not be thought of ; and it was impossible at that time to take a separate walk from them. With regard to the transaction of 1767, I do recollect that I, as well as others, did, in some particulars, differ from your grace's opinion. I think you will do me the justice to believe, that it was not out of any particular regard to Bedford House. Indeed, independently of my former observations, I saw clearly, during the supper at Lord Rockingham's, the most unamiable dispositions ; a behaviour in some of them that was scarcely polite ; and a reserve, which wine, circulated briskly until the sunbeams drove us from it, was not able to dispel, though these people are not indeed candid, but naturally very loose and careless talkers. But I thought I saw too, that the whole treaty, on the part of the Duke of Grafton and

Lord Camden, and much more another, was merely an imposition both on you and on Conway ;—principally meant to bring the latter to act the part he did afterwards ; and I can scarcely forbear being still of opinion, they never meant to bring you in, except on terms that, when they became explicit, you could neither have accepted nor rejected, without great detriment and disgrace to you. I conclude this, not only from the closet disavowal in the middle of your proceedings, but from a conversation with General Conway, a few days after all was broke off, in which he very frankly told me, that the intention never was to bring in the whole even of *your* body, but about half a dozen (I think) of the principal people ; and to let you make way for the rest as opportunities should offer. Constituted as the remaining part of the Ministry was, this was a novel plan of power which would enable you to serve your cause. Your grace, I dare say, recollects that we did all, in effect and substance, at last accede to your grace's opinion ; when, after a long consultation, protracted to near two o'clock in the morning, and after frequent messages backward and forward, your grace at length carried the ultimatum to General Conway, and never received an answer from that day to this. On the whole, I saw so little real intention towards you at that time, either in the Duke of Grafton, or Lord Camden, or General Conway, or in the first mover, that I cannot, without great difficulty, attribute our present condition to our rejection of the proposals of the court ; for, in effect, if they had been such as your grace thought them, the treaty never could have broken off on account of Bedford House, which had broken with you, and that in a manner equally insolent and scandalous, before that business concluded. Your grace remembers well the character of the Duke of Newcastle, who always treated with his enemies, in beginning by putting himself into their power, and by offering more than they would think of asking ; and whose jealousy, little short of frenzy, of Lord Rockingham, about objects

which he neither would nor could have held, drove him headlong into any snare his adversaries laid for him. Lord Albemarle, too, had his attention to the Duke of Bedford; but I must say with as great, as just suspicions of him and his, as with attachment to you, on the total. Yet it was very necessary to look to both these persons; and they, at least one of them, and the most material, required nothing more than an empty compliment; and this the court knew, or might have known, as well as we did. But whether I am mistaken or not, the thing being passed, it only gives pain to attribute our misfortunes to our faults, where circumstances will not suffer our repentance to amend them. Bad they are indeed! but where things are desperate with regard to power, they are not always in a situation the most unfavourable to character. Decorum, firmness, consistency, courage, patient, manly perseverance,—these are the virtues of despair. They are worth something, surely; and none has profited so much of that situation as your grace, nor could you have shown of what materials you are made in any other. Persons in your station of life ought to have long views. You people of great families and hereditary trusts and fortunes, are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be, by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavour, yet still are but annual plants, that perish with our season, and leave no sort of traces behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country, and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation. The immediate power of a Duke of Richmond, or a Marquis of Rockingham, is not so much of moment; but if their conduct and example hand down their principles to their successors, then their houses become the public repositories and offices of record for the constitution; not like the Tower, or Rolls-chapel, where it is searched for and sometimes in vain, in rotten parchments under

dripping and perishing walls, but in full vigour, and acting with vital energy and power, in the character of the leading men and natural interests of the country. It has been remarked that there were two eminent families at Rome, that for several ages were distinguished uniformly by opposite characters and principles, the Claudian and Valerian. The former were high and haughty, but public-spirited, firm, and active, and attached to the aristocracy. The latter were popular in their tempers, manners, and principles. So far the remark:—but I add that any one, who looks attentively to their history, will see that the balance of that famous constitution was kept up for some ages, by the personal characters, dispositions, and traditionary politics of certain families, as much as by anything in the laws and orders of the State; so that I do not look upon your time or lives lost, if, in this sliding away from the genuine spirit of the country, certain parties, if possible, if not the heads of certain families, should make it their business, by the whole course of their lives, principally by their example, to mould into the very vital stamina of their descendants, those principles which ought to be transmitted pure and unmixed to posterity. Neither Lord Rockingham nor your grace have children: however, you do not want successors of your blood; nor, I trust, heirs of your qualities and your virtues, and of the power which sooner or later will be derived from them. This I say to comfort myself, and possibly your grace, in the present melancholy view of our affairs. ‘Although the field is lost all is not lost,’ to give you a line of your Milton, who has somewhat reconciled you to poetry,—and he is an able advocate. For the rest, I can only tell your grace, that . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here the draft breaks off.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Broad Sanctuary, Thursday, Nov. 19, 1772.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I cannot attribute the opening of my letter to mere curiosity, except it were the interested curiosity of some base politician. I should think the villain might be traced, and in some way or other, the principal or the instrumental delinquent punished. A few days before I had received your lordship's by Mr. Thesiger, I wrote pretty largely by the same conveyance, on the subject of my conversation at Pall Mall, and on the opinions of such other friends as I could collect. They were, on the whole, adverse to the idea I suggested to them. As I have stated this matter so much at large, and as your lordship has received Mr. Dowdeswell's long and able letter, it is not necessary to say more by this unconfidential conveyance.

I am somewhat anxious about your lordship's presence at the meeting. This wish is always in subordination to the demands of your health. But as I hope you have not lately gone backward, I incline to flatter myself, that a journey hither would do you more good than harm. It would free us from a great awkwardness of situation. If this meets your lordship at Wentworth, it will be rather late for my purpose, which I might indeed have considered, when I sat down to write. If however, unluckily, I have not blundered so much as I hope I have, I have just to mention to your lordship that the East India Company had yesterday received a message from the Treasury, the report of whose contents immediately sunk the stock, I was told, seven per cent. : as the message, which desired to know what plans for their relief the company had to lay before Parliament, conveyed in the end very strongly, an implication that they would not be permitted to make any dividend. This is all the news

I hear. My respectful compliments to Lady Rockingham; and believe me, with the greatest truth and affection,

My dear lord,  
Your lordship's most obedient, and  
obliged humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Beaconsfield, Monday, November 23, 1772.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I came hither this day, in order to settle some little affairs, having been rather disagreeably detained in town for about a fortnight. A few hours after my arrival your lordship's messenger brought me your most obliging letter of the 20th. I am pleased that you have taken your final resolution of spending your holidays at Wentworth. As the session approaches, I see the probability of a full attendance of your friends almost vanish. Mr. Dowdeswell will not be in town at the meeting. I think it rather likely that the Duke of Richmond will continue in the country. On the whole, I am satisfied that your presence in London, with danger to your health, would hurt us all much more, both in our feelings and our interests, than a temporary absence which may tend to give us a longer, a more effectual, and a more satisfactory use of your counsel and assistance. We will do the best we can, that is, we will do as little as we can. For, in truth, what is there left for us to do? In the present state of the popular opinions, of the designs of the court, of the distractions of the company, what can one or two effect, utterly unsupported, if not directly thwarted, by nine-tenths of those who upon common occasions are the only friends we have to rely upon? This is our state, and we must submit to it.

Your lordship sees I confine my present consideration

entirely to the affairs of the East India Company, because I am persuaded that, for the present, Ministry does not mean to bring any other before us. Sir George Colebrooke has at last lent me, for a day or two, copies of the papers which have been demanded by the Treasury. I have looked them over as carefully as the time would admit. I am more convinced than ever of the very flourishing state of their affairs, and that their present embarrassment is not from a defect of substance, but merely from a difficulty with regard to cash. Into this difficulty they never could have fallen by the mismanagements of their servants abroad ; though these have been, I make no doubt, very considerable and very culpable. It is the rapine of Parliament, covered under the name of two agreements ; one for revenues in India, which never have existed, as a matter of profit, to either of the claimants ; another for a speculation upon teas, which had no foundation, and which it is downright extortion in the Government to exact, that has given theirs and public credit such a shock. In all the conversations I have had both with Colebrooke and with a person of very opposite character and designs (Mr. Gregory), I have no kind of doubt with myself that a million might and ought to be borrowed, and that there will then be sufficient fund for payment of interest at five per cent., leaving also an ample provision for sinking the principal, provided Parliament can prevail upon itself to give up a claim, which, while it has an existence, will never suffer the company or the nation to enjoy a moment's quiet or security. If this loan were authorized by Parliament, and the senseless claims abandoned, the proprietors could, with great safety to their capital, divide twelve and a half per cent., and continue to do so, while events suffer their trade to continue in its present situation. It is true, I was originally of another opinion ; but a view of the papers, which have been demanded for purposes wholly adverse to the company, and the most serious consideration of the affair, have made me alter my sentiments. If I do not misapprehend

Mr. Dowdeswell, who first gave my mind this turn, he does not object to the reduction of dividend, as supposing it a coercive measure of Government, but as a step dangerous to the rights of the company, though taken by themselves; for by this measure the stock, already very low, will fall to the ground; and Government, under pretence of a composition or purchase, may with the greatest facility, and without any appearance of arbitrary power, take into their own hands the charter, and, with it, all the rights and possessions of the company. It was the high dividend and high price of stock in 1767, that rescued the company out of their clutches. I would not have your lordship mistake me so far, as to think I would represent the keeping up the dividend at twelve and a half per cent., as a measure that, in the present disposition of Ministry, I conceive to be at all practicable. I only speak of it as what I seriously think appears, on the face of the papers, to be the only means of supporting public credit on a proper foundation; and of keeping the company out of the hands of any court projector, who may think of decorating the crown with the collected spoils of the East. The proprietors, however, who see no other way of getting rid of the encumbrance of the £400,000, are, I think, in general prepared to acquiesce in the reduction to six per cent. The court, I believe, have for the present given up all sort of hope of receiving that sum; and, therefore, have rejected the first, and I really think the only propositions, that can be made for the relief of the company in the present exigency. They are so far from meaning, therefore, to keep up a forced dividend, either to themselves or to the proprietors, by improper borrowing, that I am apprehensive they have fallen into the very opposite extreme. They seem resolved to admit of no dividend whatsoever. Lord North sent a Treasury letter to the court of directors, calling on them to lay before him their ideas of a method of relief, and concluded with desiring to know 'upon what foundation they intended to declare any dividend'. This message came during some sales; and the

purport of it having been spread about, I hear caused a fall of seven per cent, in the price of stock. If this wicked project should be carried into execution, it is easy to see that there is an end of the company ; and a beginning of such a scene of frauds, impositions, and treasury jobbing of all sorts, both here and in India, as will soon destroy all the little honesty and public spirit we have left.

I am not governed in my present opinions by any idea of our being tied down to a servile adherence to the maxims which we supported in 1767 ; since it is obvious, that, when we have no interest one way or other in the point, we might be allowed, without any suspicion of deserting our principles, to alter an opinion upon six years' experience, if six years' experience had given us reason to change it. But the fact is, that we never denied,—on the contrary, we always urged it to be the province and duty of Parliament to superintend the affairs of this company, as well as every other matter of public concern ; but we considered it as a very different business to enter a house in order to regulate it, from breaking in in order to rob it. We considered it as the duty of Parliament to see that the company did not abuse its charter privileges, or misgovern its Asiatic possessions ; but we thought it abominable to declare their dividends in the House of Commons, and to seize their revenues into the hands of the Crown. These, I am sure, were our opinions then, and I see no sort of reason for altering them since that time.

On foreign politics, I shall not trouble your lordship, until I hear something more of facts. I do not hear that they intend to engage us that way, at least not directly, on the meeting. Nor does the reduction of the seamen to 20,000, nor the ministerial attempts on the company, look like an intention of making war.

I am infinitely obliged to Lady Rockingham for her ladyship's intention of honouring me with a letter. Nobody can be more sensible of her ladyship's goodness

and condescension, or more willing to obey her commands.

I will detain your messenger no longer ; I have, indeed, little to say, but what I never say but with the greatest truth, that I am,

My dear lord,

Your affectionate and obliged humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

On casting my eye over what I have written, I find I have expressed myself equivocally in one part. It might seem as if Sir George Colebrooke and Mr. Gregory had approved my ideas of borrowing, dividend, &c. This I do not know. I only mean to say that after conversing with them abundantly on the subject of the papers, &c., I am exceedingly confirmed in my opinion of what would be best to do, if I had in my choice what ought to be done.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO A PRUSSIAN  
GENTLEMAN

1772.

SIR,

Permit me to return you my most sincere thanks for the honour of your very obliging letter. Nothing can be more polite than the offer of your correspondence, and nothing more acceptable than your specimen of it.

I hope you will not look on the long delay of my acknowledgements, as a proof that I want the fullest sense of the great favour I have received. I owed you the best considered and the best informed judgement I could make, on the question which you proposed. The answer might affect your property, which you will give me leave to regard as a matter far from indifferent to me. After all, I am obliged to own to you, that the more I have inquired, and the more I have reflected, the less capable I find myself of giving you any advice on which I can venture to confide. I have never had any concern in the funds of the East India Company, nor have taken any part whatsoever in its affairs,

except when they came before me in the course of parliamentary proceedings. Of late years, the intervention of the claims and powers of Government, the magnitude of the possessions in the East, which have involved the concerns of the company with the contentions of parties at home, and with the mass of the politics of Asia and Europe, together with many other particulars, have rendered all reasonings upon that stock a matter of more intricacy and delicacy, than whilst the company was restrained within the limits of a moderate commerce. However, one advantage has arisen from the magnitude of this object, and the discussions which have grown from its importance, that almost everything relative to it is become very public. The proceedings in Parliament and in the India House, have given as many lights to the foreign stockholders as to the inhabitants of this kingdom. Many persons on the Continent, as well as here, are more capable of giving you good information than I am; I dare not risk an opinion. I am persuaded you will have the goodness to excuse a caution, which has its rise from my extreme tenderness towards your interest.

With regard to general politics, you judge very properly that we are more removed from them than you are, who live in the centre of the political circle. However, though situated in the circumference, we have our share of concern and curiosity. I am happy to receive that information which I have no right to expect, and no ability to requite. My situation is very obscure and private, and I have scarce anything to do, but with the minute detail of our own internal economy. To this I confine myself entirely. As to the grand machine, I admire its effects, without being often able to comprehend its operations, or to discover its springs. I look on these events as historical. The distance of place, and absence from management, operate as remoteness of time. I am obliged to you for your account of his Prussian majesty's military arrangements. I make no doubt that a prince so wise and

politic will improve his new acquisitions (for I am not to call them conquests) to the best advantage for his power and greatness. I agree no less with your observation, that it was extremely fortunate the three great allied Powers were able to find a fourth which was utterly unable to resist any one of them, and much less all united. If this circumstance had not concurred with their earnest inclinations to preserve the public tranquillity, they might have been obliged to find a discharge for the superfluous strength of their plethoric habits in the destruction of the finest countries in Europe.

One great branch of the alliance has not been quite so fortunate. Russia seems to me still to retain, though under European forms and names, too much of the Asiatic spirit in its government and manners to be long well poised and secure within itself; and without that advantage, nothing I apprehend can be done in a long struggle. Turkey is not prey, at least, for those whose motions are sometimes indeed precipitate, but seldom alert. The nature of the Turkish frontier provinces, an immense foss-ditch (if I may so call it) of desert, is a defence made indeed, in a great measure, at the expense of mankind, but still, it is a great defence; and the applicability, if not the extent, of the Turkish resources are much greater than those of the northern enemy. It is not now likely that my paradoxical wish should be answered, or that I should live to see the Turkish barbarism civilized by the Russian. I don't wish well to the former Power. Any people but the Turks, so seated as they are, would have been cultivated in three hundred years; but they grow more gross in the very native soil of civility and refinement. I was sorry for the late misfortunes of the Russians; but I did not so well know how much of it they owed to their own obstinacy. Misfortunes are natural and inevitable to those who refuse to take advantage of the King of Prussia's lights and talents. You say that he was their Cassandra: if so, these people are inexcusable

indeed ; surely nothing could be less remote than his predictions from the ravings of virgin simplicity. They were oracles directly from the very tripod of Apollo. The rest of mankind do more justice to the heroic intellect, as well as to the other great qualities of the king your master.

Pray, dear sir, what is next ? These Powers will continue armed. Their arms must have employment. Poland was but a breakfast, and there are not many Polands to be found. Where will they dine ? After all our love of tranquillity, and all expedients to preserve it, alas, poor Peace !

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Broad Sanctuary, January 10, 1773.*

MY DEAR LORD,

My last was written a little before our concluding debate in the House of Commons, upon the India Supervision Bill. The smallness of our minority did not alarm me, though it was in reality rather lower than I imagined it would be. Other things happened on that day which surprised me a good deal more, and furnished occasion for much more unpleasant reflections. The slender appearance of friends might be well enough attributed to the season, and to the want of discipline arising from the nature of a minority, and the absence of our leader. The part which Lord George Germain took on that occasion did us great mischief at the time, and has been no small matter of triumph to the enemy ever since. My Lord Chancellor<sup>1</sup> thought proper to cast it in the Duke of Richmond's teeth, in the House of Lords. Indeed, the smallness of our division, and the impossibility of bringing our best friends to the support of our measures, were in a manner the sole arguments used in the House of Lords in favour of the ministerial bill.

<sup>1</sup> Earl Bathurst.

Your lordship will, I dare say, think we did right in dividing, notwithstanding the probable smallness of the numbers. It was right to put the gentlemen who chose to think with ministry, into the division along with them. It was necessary to show to them and to others, that this kind of conduct in some friends, cannot abate our confidence in the rectitude of our principles. It is not right that reason should be governed by whim or pique, let it be the pique or the whim of whoever it may. To divide showed a weakness in numbers ; to shrink from the division, would have shown weakness of mind and indecision of character, which is, or ought to be, of ten times worse consequence to us. In truth the battle for power is over ; nothing now remains but to preserve consistency and dignity. Lord George Germain told me he hoped we would not divide. 'I was very sorry that we should ever differ in opinion from his lordship, but we must look to ourselves in the *first place*. These had ever been our sentiments, and no human consideration should hinder me (for one) from dividing the House.' I need not say that I had not taken this resolution without concurring with Lord John Cavendish and Dowdeswell, whose opinions were sufficient for me.

I am apt to think that, notwithstanding the extraordinary line which Lord George has taken, he has no connexions with the Ministry, nor is any negotiation likely to be opened between them. In talking over this disagreeable circumstance, it has been attributed to several causes. None of them are inconsistent with the others, and all of them, I believe, are in some degree real. Strange as it may appear, with regard to a man of his time of life, and his habits of business, he feels himself flattered by having been nominated to the select committee. He is entertained beyond measure with the anecdotes he learns there ; and this amusement and importance give him a strong leaning towards those who promote inquiries productive of such agreeable effects. The Duke of Richmond thinks,

and I believe his grace is in the right, that Lord George is not quite satisfied in not having the lead of your lordship's friends in the House of Commons, and is therefore not displeased with any opportunity of throwing difficulties in the way of those measures which he does not direct. I am not sure that, along with all these, a certain natural and a certain professional leaning to strong acts of power, and to a high authority in the Crown, have not their full operation on his conduct, and give him a bias towards the court in all that they attempt against the independence of the company. Besides, I find that, whether from some remains of old Grenvillian connexion, or from whatever other cause, Lord Clive has obtained a considerable ascendant over him, and Lord Clive has acted such a part as might be expected from his character.

Much as I esteem Lord George Germain in some things, and admire him in many things, I must say, he has not taken the measure of all the party with his usual ability, if it be any part of his plan to have the lead of us in the House of Commons. The object he looks for seems to me quite unpracticable, even though Mr. Dowdeswell did not exist. I am sure while he does exist, we cannot find a leader whom a man of honour and of judgement would so soon choose to follow. In argument Lord George is apt to take a sort of undecided, equivocal, narrow ground, that evades the substantial merits of the question, and puts the whole upon some temporary, local, accidental, or personal consideration. I know that this method is much admired by some people as very parliamentary. Indeed, in some circumstances, it is right. When the objects of opposition are frivolous, it is advisable not to lay down principles which might embarrass upon a future occasion. But perhaps, in such cases, it were full as advisable not to oppose at all. Where a variety of different sentiments are to be reconciled in one vote, such a mode of proceeding has, I also admit, its use. But then one ought to know that those whom we wish to please do themselves

wish to be pleased; or else we lose more by not standing by our own principle, than we gain by our partial and seeming conformity to theirs. I am clear that my latter parliamentary experience has been all upon that side. This oblique method, taken as a general way of proceeding, is so alien to the sentiments of some, and so repugnant to the natural temper and cast of their minds, that I suspect no authority of a leader could ever oblige them to take their fixed post upon such ground. Whatever it may do within the House, it makes no figure at all without doors, and has no other effect than to persuade the people that the opposition acts without any sort of principle. The questions which have been agitated during this reign, are almost all of them *leading points*, on which it is very necessary that men should have a decided opinion, and that their opinion should be known. If I were to choose an example of the ill effects of this method of stating the grounds of an opposition, I would go no further than to the very last debate. I speak upon a supposition that the intentions were fair and simple. When the motion was made for leave to bring in the bill, he spoke against it. But he chose to make his opposition upon the supposed resolution of the directors not to send out the commission. He not only founded himself upon this hollow and insufficient bottom (bad as principle, though proper as subsidiary), but he did it to the entire exclusion of any other; for he declared, at the same time, that if he were not persuaded such was the intention of the company, nobody should be more forward in restraining the commission than himself. In this manner he chose to admit the *principle* of the bill, and left it to accidents, or indeed rather to the discretion of the Ministry, to guide his conduct in the succeeding steps of its progress.

Accordingly, they got one of their instruments in the India House, at the moment when the petition against this very bill was in agitation, to move a suspension of the commission, which motion, as most

insidious and most unseasonable, was put by with a previous question. It is true that Lord G. was under no necessity of voting for the bill afterwards, as their putting a previous question was no proof that commission would be sent out, and as no man believed that the commissioners would venture themselves from home, in the present disposition of Parliament, without ministerial authority. However, the narrowness of his ground did put him into difficulties. He supported the bill on the third reading, which he had opposed on the first suggestion. Now what sort of figure should those of us, who thought this bill radically wrong, make upon such ground chosen by our leader? unpleasant to desert him, undoubtedly—much worse to desert our conscience and principles. These are dilemmas to which this narrow politic ground will always expose an opposition. One can scarcely put one foot firm on it, and if you lose your balance never so little, you tumble down a precipice on the one side or the other.

I find I have got a great way on this subject. But no persons except those who were present can rightly conceive the mischief which has happened to us by the kind of part Lord G. G. thought proper to take; not only on account of the methods, but on account of the extraordinary degree of warmth and vehemence with which he pursued them. I need not say with what shouts of applause his speech was received by the majority. Such success attending such conduct cannot fail to encourage *him* to a perseverance in it, as well as *others* to an imitation of it. Besides, it does so damp and dishearten all that act with us, that though no man can be more sensible than I am of the great advantage you derive from the wealthy connexion, which, if he has not brought, he at least tends to keep with your lordship, and of the weight you have from his personal ability in Parliament, yet I do venture to say, that three such days in the House of Commons would more than overbalance all these advantages, and even much greater; and that if no

method can be found of convincing his lordship that this mode of acting is infinitely prejudicial to the interest which he honours with his apparent support, it would be far better the world understood you had no connexion, and that he went directly and avowedly to the Ministry.

I saw no friend of ours in the majority but old Tommy Townshend.<sup>1</sup> His son stayed away. These are men of, I believe, the very nicest principles of honour, and of very good understandings, I can readily allow; for the difficulties into which they have been led in this business, while they thought they were following Lord Chatham, under the direction of the court guides, into whose management he had put those friends of his and your lordship's, who suffered their public principles to be turned into a blind confidence in him. It is better that they should leave us now and then, than degrade themselves by anything like inconsistency, even where they took up their opinions on a very slight consideration, or rather wholly on the authority of others. In that view I look upon Tommy Townshend's staying away rather in the light of a civility to his friends than otherwise. But still, not being at all willing, nor indeed wholly able to blame him, I cannot but lament that every now and then he is disposed to a great deference to the opinions of those who are at most but allies to that body which I am sure he loves by far the best. Latterly he became a great admirer of George Grenville. Since then, Lord George Germain has more weight with him than anybody else. It is somewhat singular and a little vexatious, that when your lordship was so strongly disposed to the idea of our absenting ourselves from Parliament, those upon whose authority that proposition was overruled (at least they had a very considerable share in promoting the attendance), should be the very persons who, when we are met in conformity to their opinions, make no other use of that opportunity

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Thomas Townshend, father of Mr. Thomas Townshend, who was created Lord Sydney in 1783.

than to show the distractions that prevail among us, and to give all possible support to those ministerial measures which they must have foreseen would be proposed, and which they knew, by our former conduct, we were bound to oppose. It was a prospect of this that made me give so heartily into the idea started by the Duke of Richmond last summer, of our absenting ourselves from the House. I am sure it were much better keep away, than to come to the House with no other purpose than to dispute among ourselves, divert the Ministry, and divide twenty-eight. It is certain that the East India affairs will be the perpetual business of Parliament; and unless we can be made to form some sort of system upon that subject, and come to see the necessity either of understanding the matter, every man for himself, or of taking the authority of some among ourselves whose understandings and conduct make them deserving of trust, we are strengthening the hands of our adversaries every day we take our places in Parliament.

As to the people abroad, I told your lordship in my last, that I found them far better disposed than I originally expected. I am sure they would in general go with an opposition to the proceedings of the court. They might be easily brought to perceive what is in reality the fact, that they mean to screen and not to punish offenders; that they mean not to reform abuses, but to take away franchises; and that they only attack the company, in order to transfer their wealth and their influence to the court. I mentioned to your lordship, that I had taken some pains upon this subject. I saw and spoke to several; possibly I might have done service to the cause, but I did none to myself. This method of going hither and thither, and agitating things personally, when it is not done in chief, lowers the estimation of whoever is engaged in such transactions, especially as they judge in the House of Commons, that a man's intentions are pure, in proportion to his languor in endeavouring to carry them into execution. However, thus much I have learned

to a great certainty, that the people will not be more wanting to us upon this, than upon any other business if we are not wanting to ourselves.

Your lordship's presence, I trust, will bring things again into order. Nobody but yourself can do it. We fall into confusion the moment you turn your back; and though you have the happiness of many friends of very great ability and industry, and of unshakable fidelity to the cause, nobody but yourself has the means of rightly managing the different characters, and reconciling the difficult interests, that make up the corps of opposition. God forbid that even this should be compassed at the expense of your health; but that I hope is restored, and I flatter myself we shall feel the good effects of it.

The Duke of Richmond did wonderfully well in the House of Lords. Somebody observed that he was a host of debaters in himself. I heard him on the last day's debate, as strangers were admitted along with the council. I was told that the Duke of Portland spoke extremely well on presenting the petition. If his grace gave his excellent understanding a direction that way, I am sure he would make a public speaker of very great weight and authority. I could wish your lordship would converse a little with Sir G. Savile on these subjects. We know his motives for staying away. Those who heard his disclaimer of the select committee, may also remember them. This is very true, but still to the majority his absence will seem a condemnation of our conduct; and of what weight that apparent tacit condemnation is, every one may discern, who knows how much the strength of our cause has arisen from its having his support. I have said nothing to him on this subject; I was not entitled to that freedom, and it would indeed be giving him uneasiness to no effect; and that I would not willingly do, even though some moderate good effect should follow it.

If your lordship's friends are not pretty generally got together early, and properly talked to, permit me,

my lord, with the earnestness that our good cause infuses into me, to repeat again, that nothing but disgrace can attend our half-digested and half-enforced operations. When I receive your lordship's commands I shall attend ; when I hear things are in a right train, I shall attend with pleasure.

In the meantime I profit of this little cessation of business, to apply to the education of my son, and to the means of his doing something for himself in the world. I shall have nothing else to leave him ; and your lordship, and all those I wish to please, would censure me, if I were wholly negligent in this point. The boy deserves well of me, for he is not idle, and he has a good disposition. He is lately entered a student of Christ Church in Oxford ; and answered, on the examination, to the satisfaction of those who examined him. I think he is full young for the University ; and the Bishop of Chester has been so good as to indulge him with a year's leave of absence. It is a good time to form his tongue to foreign languages. I feel, almost every day of my life, the inconvenience of wanting them. So I propose to take him with me to Blois. Mr. Hampden speaks well of that place for pleasantness, cheapness, and total freedom from the resort of English. My friend Mr. King<sup>1</sup> continuing his uncommon regards towards us both, will be with him. I am advised to go by Paris. Whenever I know your lordship's wishes, I shall be with you in a few days. I don't intend to remain a week in Paris, as I go out. On my return I shall stay there until your lordship informs me that something is put into train at home.

This is Thursday ; I mean to set out on Sunday morning. I came to town to-day, and called at Dowdeswell's. He is out of town ; but I hear he will return to-morrow, and then I shall have an opportunity of talking with him. Your lordship will

<sup>1</sup> The Reverend Thomas King, brother of Dr. Walker King, afterwards Bishop of Rochester.

be so kind as to present my most dutiful compliments to Lady Rockingham. I am ever, with the truest affection and attachment,

My dear lord,  
Ever your lordship's most obliged friend  
and humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

*Broad Sanctuary, January 10, 1773.*

I THINK of writing a short note from Calais to Mr. Bentinck. Since I finished the above I received your lordship's most welcome letter, and am extremely obliged to you for it. It is true that the line of defence settled by the counsel was turned in the manner your lordship has mentioned. If they had omitted it, they would have suffered equally. No abuses stated. The reason of expense assigned in the preamble would have had great strength, for small abuses will not justify expensive arrangements. If the abuses were proved to be *great*, then they were above their measure. This I say from a sense of the temper of the House; for I had no share in concerting their plan, further than that on hearing they meant to examine evidence, I was in hopes that they might embarrass the Ministry in point of time. The line to which your lordship thinks they ought to have stuck entirely was strongly marked by them, but it received the same disadvantageous turn. Several of the minority gave the company's having contested the right and propriety of parliamentary interference, as the reason for their vote for the bill. When anybody is doomed to destruction, all the arguments he alleges for his safety become new grounds for cutting him off. It was well observed by the counsel, that in the year 1767, when the court, by a law of its own, limited its dividend, and therefore prayed that an Act of Parliament should not pass for that purpose, it was retorted on them that the Act did no more than confirm *what they had done themselves*.

Now he found the chief reason urged for passing the bill was, *that they declined themselves to restrain their supervision*, so that whether they declined, or did not decline the use of their franchises, the reason was equally cogent for taking them away. Just in that impertinent, sophistical manner did they argue then and now ; everything is a reason to people for doing what they choose to do. I think it not unlikely that Mr. Dowdeswell will tell you of a visit he has had from Cornewall,<sup>1</sup> after a long absence. The Shelburnes seem to repent of having done nothing in this business, and appear rather disposed to come round. My clear opinion is, that however I may like, as I do, some individuals in that body, the corps, as a corps, is naught ; and that no time or occasion can probably occur, in which, in the way of consultation or communication, it would be right to have anything to do with them. My great uneasiness is about our own corps, which appears to me in great danger of dissolution. Nothing can prevent it in my opinion, but the speedy and careful application of your lordship's own peculiar, persuasive, and conciliatory manner, in talking over public business, and leading them into a proper line of conduct. I know they flatter themselves that it is on this only occasion that they shall differ. But what occasion is there, that in its nature can occur so often, continue so long, or lead into consequences so completely ruinous to public interest and public virtue ? Is not this the great object of the court ? If they carry their point in this, of what advantage is any future contest ? Besides, the very habit of confiding in the plans of their old enemies, is dangerous to the existence of a party in opposition. Never had people less reason for such confidence, than we have in this Ministry, and in this very business.

Our friends, too, think they do very handsomely, when they say they will oppose the design of seizing

<sup>1</sup> Charles Wolfran Cornewall, a Lord of the Treasury under Lord North from March 1774 to September 1780.

on the company's patronage, when that design is openly avowed by the court. It never will be avowed in its extent, and the plan never will (for a plain reason, that it never can,) be executed at one stroke. The business will be done covertly and piecemeal, and our friends will help it forward in the detail, and thus completely finish it, in hopes of some time or other opposing it in the gross.

I see I run over and over the same ideas. Your lordship will be so good to excuse this extreme, and, I rather hope, unusual prolixity. I think your presence much wanted, and early, in order to take a review of the troops before the opening of the next campaign, that, if you should not find them in readiness for action, you would persuade them to remain quietly in their quarters.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO MR. RICHARD BURKE  
JUN., AND MR. T. KING

*Paris, February, 1773.*

MY DEAR CHILDREN,

While I wait with some impatience to hear of your health, and your satisfaction in your new settlement,<sup>1</sup> I just write to give you the pleasure of knowing that we got to Paris late at night, Tuesday, but well as we could wish, without any troublesome accident whatsoever. I can write but little now, but I make amends, by sending you two letters from your mamma. I received others from Mr. Burke and my brother, but though they relate to you, and are full of such expressions of kindness to you both as would be very agreeable to you, yet as they contain some matters for my direction, in some particulars here, I must keep them. I write from Mr. Panchaud's, who will send Mr. King a bill for twenty-five louis next Friday, which is the soonest that it can be remitted to you; for the rest I shall settle in a few days: I may stay

<sup>1</sup> They were then living in Auxerre.

at Paris ten days or a fortnight longer. So don't neglect, one or the other of you, to write to me constantly. My good friends, while I do most earnestly recommend you to take care of your health and safety, as things most precious to us, I would not have that care degenerate into an effeminate and over-curious attention, which is always disgraceful to a man's self, and often troublesome to others. So you know my meaning, when I wish you again and again to take care of yourselves for our sake. So, when I wish you to avoid superfluous expenses, as giving the mind loose and bad habits, be aware that I wish you to avoid everything that is mean, sordid, illiberal, and uncharitable, which is much the worst extreme. Do not spare yourselves nor me in this point. As you are now a little setting up for yourselves, suffer me to give you a little direction about the article of *giving*. When others of decent condition are giving along with you, never give more than they do; it is rather an affront to them, than a service to those that desire your little bounty. Whatever else you do, do it separately. But always preserve a habit of giving (but still with discretion), however little, as a habit not to be lost. When I speak of this, the funds of neither of you are large, and perhaps never may become so. So that the first thing is justice. Whatever one gives, ought to be from what one would otherwise spend, not from what he would otherwise pay. To spend little and give much, is the highest glory a man can aspire to. As to studies, I do not wish you, till you have conquered a little the difficulties of the French, to apply to anything else but that and Greek. More would distract and hurt, so don't trouble yourselves with geometry and logic, until you hear from me on the subject. Reading, and much reading, is good; but the power of diversifying the matter infinitely in your own mind, and of applying it to every occasion that arises, is far better, so don't suppress the *vivida vis*. May God grant you every blessing. Remember Him first, and last, and midst.

Keep yourselves constantly in His presence. Again and again, God bless you.

Your ever affectionate father,

EDM. BURKE.

My most hearty respects to the family you are with, to Abbé Vaulhier, and the very worthy and ingenious gentlemen who are so worthy of his friendship, to the Count D'Esper, and all friends. Adieu !

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Tuesday night, February 2, 1774.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I have just received your lordship's letter. It is half an hour after ten ; so that if I say much, I shall, I fear, be too late for the fly. I rejoice most heartily at your coming to town, and at Lady Rockingham's happy recovery. I wish your lordship had brought your share of health with you ; but I flatter myself that the journey and the change will rather do you service. I wish your lordship would not take things too anxiously. If the Duke of Richmond were to succeed in the India House, it would be a matter of great triumph. But if he has failed, or even if he should fail finally, we ought not to be surprised at it ; as the whole power of Government has been employed to gain that body, which the whole power of Parliament has been employed to new-model for that purpose. But I really do not think it absolutely impossible that they may yet be able to save something from the talons of despotism. Your lordship will find all your friends, though not active, yet all at their posts ; in good humour with one another ; in no bad spirits ; firmly attached to their principles and to your lordship. As to others, I hope they begin to know to whom it is they owe their present situation. I mean all such (few indeed) as *choose* not to play the same part of division and subdivision themselves.

As to Lord Buckinghamshire,<sup>1</sup> I always thought America was his object, and that he would begin with a motion for papers. Whether he got them, or what was said on the part of administration, I know not. It was the Duke of Richmond's, Mr. Dowdeswell's, and Lord Fitzwilliam's, as well as Lord J. Cavendish's sentiment, that your lordship's friends in the House of Peers ought to absent themselves, and not to countenance the interested petulance of those paltry discontented people, who, without embracing your principles, or giving you any sort of support, think to make use of your weight to give consequence to every occasional spirit of opposition they think proper to make, in order to put the Ministry in mind that they are to be bought by private contract, as unconnected individuals. When you mean opposition, you are able to take it up on your own grounds, and at your own time. I cannot think they can bring on any question this week.

Your lordship remarks very rightly on the supineness of the public. Any remarkable highway robbery at Hounslow Heath would make more conversation than all the disturbances of America.

There were five-and-thirty at council on the petition to remove Governor Hutchinson.<sup>2</sup> Dunning,<sup>3</sup> counsel for the province, denied that there was any cause instituted. That the petition charged no crime, and made no accusation. It applied to the wisdom of the Crown, and did not make a demand for justice. It was with the king to grant or to refuse. They had no impeachment to make, and no evidence to produce. It was well and ably put. Lee seconded;—Wedderburn replied in a very well-performed invective against the assembly, and all the town meetings of New England; justifying the governor, and laying on most heavily,

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Buckinghamshire was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in November 1776.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Franklin presented a petition from Massachusetts praying for the removal of the governor.

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Lord Ashburton.

indeed beyond all bounds and measure, on Dr. Franklin. I am told the Doctor is to be dismissed from whatever employments he holds under the Crown. There is nothing else stirring.

I am, with the utmost affection and attachment,

My dear lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF RICHMOND

*September, 1774.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I am this moment honoured with your grace's letter of the 26th instant. With your usual indulgence and condescension to my weakness, you are so good as not to blame me for an application in favour of my friend. I must confess that, where I have had such an object in view, I have not usually made any scruple to violate, in some degree, the strict letter and *summum jus* of decorum and propriety. By this conduct I am conscious that I have made some enemies; but I have the satisfaction of feeling, at the same time, that enemies so made are almost the only ones I have in the world. It would undoubtedly be great folly to expect, and great presumption to recommend to others, a conduct which is not, perhaps, exactly justifiable to prudence in myself. But in the present case, I really think, on all accounts, my enemies may be excused. Indeed, I am so anxious to stand well with your grace, that you will permit me, though you do not require it, to lay before you the reasons why I did not at first perceive the impropriety of my application to your grace upon this occasion. I was utterly ignorant, I assure you, that your grace had lived in any habits of intimacy with Lord Temple, or that you were related to him in any near degree of consanguinity. With regard to affecting his family interest, I was equally ignorant that he had a family interest in the county of

Buckingham, which none of his name has ever yet represented, and where, indeed, the Grenvilles are comparatively strangers.<sup>1</sup> Lord Verney is now member for the county, and so far in possession. His family have, for many centuries, had an ample property, and no small consideration in it; and this consideration has, on Lord Verney's part, been very well merited, as I believe no man in England, without the exception of another, has been so indulgent, humane, and moderate a landlord, on an estate of considerable extent, or a greater protector to all the poor within his reach. So that, I apprehend, it is Lord Verney's personal and family interest which are attacked by Lord Temple, and not Lord Temple's that is attacked by Lord Verney. As they are near neighbours, hitherto they have lived in great appearance of mutual friendship; and I am persuaded that if Lord Verney had attached himself to the same party with Lord Temple, to which he did not altogether want invitation, he would now have neither the least uncertainty, nor a shilling expense, in his election.

With regard to the other impropriety of the application, that Lord Verney is not known to your grace, it is undoubtedly a great misfortune to him, as well as to all others in the same circumstances, that he is not honoured with your acquaintance. But, as by this means your grace is a stranger to him, I take the liberty to state to you what he had done to entitle him to some sort of slight countenance in his election (for I did not presume to ask for more), from that party of which your grace is a capital ornament and principal support. He has told in Parliament, including himself, for four members; Mr. W. Burke, Mr. Bullock, and myself, are three of them, who, as well as Lord V., for the last nine years, have been diligent attenders, and have never given a vote against your interest. All these elections were carried off without any sort of trouble to the

<sup>1</sup> This is a mistake, as the antiquity of the Grenvilles in Buckinghamshire is very great indeed.

party. He was likewise at an enormous expense to get a fifth member, and would have got him too, if justice had been done at the trial in the House of Commons ; so that it is not through his want of exertion that you had not five. If his modesty has been such, that with his zealous attempts to do service he is not so much as known in the party, it is one of the natural effects of that unhappy virtue. With regard to my having taken upon me to do what Lord Verney did not risk himself, your grace will attribute my presumption to a cause as natural as the former, your extraordinary and unmerited indulgence,—a thing which makes us sometimes forget ourselves ; and, perhaps in some degree, to a thorough consciousness that, on my part, I have been at all hours, and without any sort of reserve, at your grace's devotion ; but this last is such a very trifle, and has been so much overpaid in acceptance, that it can hardly be reckoned among my excuses for the attempt.

I wish you may not be tired with the length of my apology, I am beyond measure fearful of offending your grace, and I had rather, in these cases, be acquitted than pardoned.

It would give me very unfeigned concern, for the sake of the public, that your grace could seriously think or talk of being sick of politics. Let me say that you have tolerable corroborants for the stomach. It is not for want of bitters that it is so weak. But in serious earnest you have less reason for this despondency than most men. Your constitution of mind is such that you must have a pursuit ; and in that which you have chosen, you have obtained a very splendid reputation, which is no slight object to every generous spirit. You have exerted very great abilities in a very excellent cause, and with very noble associates. You have not disappointed your friends, nor have they disappointed you ; and if, on casting up the account, you find your power in the state not equal to your services to the public, you have, notwithstanding, a high rank in your country, which kings cannot take from you, and a

fortune fully equal to your station, though not (it would be hard to find one) to the personal dignity of your mind. My dear lord, the whole mass of this taken together, is not to be called unhappiness, nor ought it to drive you from the public service. Private life has sorrows of its own, for which public employment is not the worst of medicines, and you may have in other things as much vexation without the same splendour. Your birth will not suffer you to be private. It requires as much struggle and violence to put yourself into private life, as to put me into public. Pardon a slight comparison, but it is as hard to sink a cork, as to buoy up a lump of lead.

I heard a few days ago from poor Dowdeswell; he is going abroad for his health. I heartily pray that he may find it. He is a man invaluable.

The paragraph with which you conclude your letter gives me great comfort, that I have not forfeited your favour and kindness. They have been hitherto no small part of my honour and satisfaction, and will always be so, while your grace takes me for what, with all my failings, I very truly am,

Your grace's most faithful and  
obedient servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Beaconsfield, September 16, 1774.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I received this morning your lordship's very kind letter of the 13th. I should certainly have prevented you by one of mine, if anything pleasant, interesting, or curious, had justified me in giving you that trouble, among so many occupations in which I could not assist, and so many anxieties which I could not relieve. I felt for your lordship's situation whilst Sir G. Savile's idea of retirement continued. I was aware of his intention before he left home. Undoubtedly his putting it in

execution would have broken up everything; and coming along with Dowdeswell's unfortunate illness, would have left no hope of re-establishing your lordship's political affairs, or those of the public, which are so intimately connected with them. As to Mr. Dowdeswell, I am really not very sanguine in my expectation of his recovery. It seems that a change of climate is his only chance. When that is the case, and the disorder an obstinate cough, I think the chance a very poor one. He has broken a blood-vessel already; and the sea, which he must cross of necessity, endangers a repetition of the same misfortune, in case he should be ill in his stomach, and obliged to strain the organs of his throat and palate. It seems it was with great reluctance that he submitted to the thoughts of this voyage. However, I understand from a letter which I had from Sir William Codrington yesterday, that he has at length agreed to it. Possibly, if the cough be only symptomatic, and the effect of a latent distemper of another kind, the great change made by the sea air, motion, and way of life, may work a cure, especially upon him, who never yet has been on that element. I most ardently wish it may. His loss would be irreparable, not only in business, of which he was the life and soul, but in society, as one of the worthiest, steadiest, and best-tempered men that ever lived.

You see by the papers that the Duke of Northumberland is likely to have some trouble in Westminster, if he puts up Lord Thomas Clinton; whether the popular party propose me or not.<sup>1</sup> Lord Mahon has entered the lists. By the illiberal tone of his advertisement, it is easy to perceive from what school he issues. It is surprising how little that set of people manage the personal honour and credit of their connexions. I do not find that he has the least encouragement from the

<sup>1</sup> It seems that Mr. Churchill, and other friends of Mr. Burke, had suggested to him the probability of his being returned for Westminster, and that Wilkes, who was then at the height of his popularity, had promised him the popular support.

leaders of the independent interest in Westminster. On my part, I am not excessively sanguine about that election ; but it would not be right to lose any matter that may be in it, by any neglects of my own. I propose, therefore, to be in town on Tuesday, and to talk over the business with those who are active in it, and first suggested it to me. I am fortunate in one respect, that the Duke of Portland is in town. I shall communicate with him as I go on. I have scarcely been from home an hour since I saw your lordship ; except at the assizes of Buckingham, where I was obliged to go on a troublesome matter of litigation, which is now over ; and at the races of Aylesbury, where I did not go, you may be assured, for the sport. It was thought that the pulse of the county would be felt there. There certainly Lord Temple was ; but I do not think he found the appearance of things very encouraging. It was thought singular, that if he was resolved his nephew should stand, he took no care to exhibit him to the county, either at the assizes or at the races. He was, however, carrying on in every quarter a private canvass for him ; and he still talks of starting him, but has taken no steps, that I can learn, to call any meeting. I thought at the races that he would have dropped it. Aubrey has abandoned his scheme. His inconsiderate attempt, without doing the least good to himself, has done Lord Verney this mischief,—that it seemed to open the ground and to habituate the county to the idea of a contest. I thought the Lowndes and the Tories seemed to give Lord Temple no sort of encouragement. What may come of it, I know not. I am convinced that Lord Temple's chief hope and principal encouragement is from the Duke of Grafton and the Government interest.

I agree with your lordship entirely ; the American and foreign affairs will not come to any crisis, sufficient to rouse the public from its present stupefaction, during the course of the next session. I have my doubts whether those at least of America, will do it for some years to come. I don't know whether the London

papers have taken in the Pennsylvania instructions to their representatives. Lest they should not, I send your lordship the Philadelphia paper which contains them. It is evident from the spirit of these instructions, as well as by the measure of a congress, and consequent embassy, that the affair will draw out into great length. If it does, I look upon it as next to impossible, that the present temper and unanimity of America can be kept up; popular remedies must be quick and sharp, or they are very ineffectual. The people there can only work on ministry through the people here, and the people here will be little affected by the sight of half a dozen gentlemen from America, dangling at the levees of Lord Dartmouth and Lord North, or negotiating with Mr. Pownall. If they had chosen the non-importation measure as the leading card, they would have put themselves on a par with us; and we should be in as much haste to negotiate ourselves out of our commercial, as they out of their constitutional difficulties. But in the present temper of the nation, and with the character of the present administration, the disorder and discontent of all America, and the more remote future mischiefs which may arise from those causes, operate as little as the division of Poland. The insensibility of the merchants of London is of a degree and kind scarcely to be conceived. Even those who are most likely to be overwhelmed by any real American confusion are amongst the most supine. The character of the Ministry either produces, or perfectly coincides with the disposition of the public. The security of the latter<sup>1</sup> does, I know, arise from an opinion of the volatile and transient nature of popular discontents; and they have the recent and comfortable experience, that those discontents which prevailed at home, and prevailed with no small violence, had evaporated of themselves without any exertion whatsoever on the part of Government. I confess I should not, in their situation, and with such great national objects at stake, repose myself with great tranquillity

<sup>1</sup> That is.—the Ministry.

either on this speculation or this experience. But they have no opinion of the vindictive justice of the nation. The worst that can happen is the loss of employment, and that evil is to be postponed to the last hour. In the meantime they have three great securities: the actual possession of power, chapter of accidents, and the Earl of Chatham. This last is the *sacra anchora*. Foreign politics do not embarrass them. The northern Powers are too remote, and France is certainly disposed to be pacific. Choiseul is not yet, ostensibly at least, in power, and some doubt whether he ever will. Things there are in the utmost confusion.

I did not stop in the above, although I am come to town in the middle of a sentence. On my arrival I found that Lord Mahon valued himself much on the support of Wilkes. The Duke of Newcastle, too, paid a visit to the Duke of Portland, and told his grace that he had refused the Duke of Northumberland's solicitation to put up Lord Thomas Clinton, and that he looked on my Lord Mahon a very proper person to be supported. Lord Mahon is to be married to Lord Chatham's daughter; and the Duke of Portland thought he could plainly perceive, by the style of the conversation, that this worthy friend of Lord Chatham thinks the ministerial tenement rather tottering, and that he wishes to house again under his old roof. On this information, I thought it right to send Dr. Morris to discover how far Mr. Wilkes continued firm to his engagements. It was not prudent to see him myself, until I should be previously apprised of his sentiments and dispositions. But my friend found the great patriot's memory as treacherous as everything else about him. For a long time he seemed totally to forget all that had passed. When he did recollect the transaction, the first idea of which had originated from himself, he then said he had heard that Mr. Burke had given it up, and that he would not be supported by his friends if he persevered; for that Lord Mountmorris had told him that he (Lord M.) was to have the Portland and Devonshire interest. He observed that Lord Mahon

was a very proper candidate ; he had promised just what they required of their candidates ; that he was to be married to Lord Chatham's daughter, and a Spanish nobleman had left him fifty thousand pounds. This last circumstance seemed to have much weight with him. He confessed that Lord Mahon had been with him seven or eight times. In short, it appeared to my friend as clearly almost as if he had been eye-witness of the whole transaction that he had touched Lord Mahon's money, and that he is desirous of extorting more, by stirring up a multitude of candidates. Although he said in my presence, that it would be an act of insanity to attempt shaking Lord Percy, his note was quite changed ; he did not know why they should not try for both members. Let Mr. Burke advertise ; though after the excellent advertisement of Lord Mahon's any other must appear *meagre*. This was his expression. In short, that affair is over. I don't know why I trouble your lordship with so many particulars of so paltry a business. I should have troubled myself very little with it, if it had not appeared to me a sort of act of duty, to endeavour all I could to settle my own parliamentary arrangements, if possible, without burthen to any friend.

The state of Lord Verney's affairs, both parliamentary and private, make it necessary for me either to quit public life, or find some other avenue to Parliament than his interest. His private circumstances are very indifferent. He has been disappointed in one or two expectations of considerable relief, which he has lately had reason to entertain ; and I am far from the least disposition, indeed, I am infinitely far from having any sort of reason, to complain of the step which he is going to take. He will, indeed he must, have those to stand for Wendover (now his only borough of three in which he had formerly an interest) who can bear the charge which that borough is to him. The first people in character in this kingdom, unpressed in their affairs, do it ; and even expect some acknowledgement of obligation for the preference. We have reason to

lament the necessity which drives him to abandon the distinguished course of disinterestedness and friendship that has hitherto actuated him, and to take the common road. There are very few who have brought men into Parliament without expense, and that too repeatedly, who were not any way of their kindred, or capable of serving their interest in their counties. Lord Verney has brought three private friends into his borough, for two Parliaments, without a shilling of advantage to himself, or the least hope of any aid from them in the support of his county election. Mr. Bullock<sup>1</sup> is indeed accidentally of some use; we are of none at all. So that we have infinite reason to be grateful for the voluntary acts of friendship which are passed; none at all to murmur at the effects of the present urgent necessity. I hope we shall be thus grateful for the little time we have to live, and the little means we shall probably ever have of showing our feeling of the friendship we have experienced.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Beaconsfield, December 5, 1774.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I think you will have the goodness to excuse this intrusion into the leisure of your recess. The season for action is drawing pretty near; if action should be the idea entertained, upon consultation among your lordship's friends. If it be not thought proper at this time, I confess I cannot foresee a time that will be proper for it. For these two last sessions, indeed for the three last, the public seemed to be so perfectly careless and supine, with regard to its most essential interests, that much exertion on our part, would rather have indicated a restlessness of spirit than a manly zeal. I concurred entirely in the reasonableness of our remaining quiet, and taking no further part in business, than what

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Bullock, Esq., Mr. Burke's colleague in the representation of Wendover.

served to mark our dissent from the measures which have been unfortunately in fashion. It was all that we could then do. Even at this time, I do not see all that spirit against Ministry, which I should have expected to rise among the people on the disappointment of every hope that had been held out to them. However, it seems to be rising, and perhaps nearly as much and as fast, as a spirit wholly unmanaged can rise. Whatever progress it may make by its own nature, we know, by abundant experience, that unless it is tempered, directed, and kept up, it never can operate to any purpose. If care be not taken of this, the present set may make an advantage, even of the mischiefs and confusion they have caused by their own blundering conduct. For, if no other persons, and no other regular system, are held out to the people at large, as objects of their confidence in time of distress, they must of necessity resort to the Ministry. By neglecting to show ourselves at this crisis, we may play into the adversary's hand the advantageous game which we have obtained, by the uniformity of our conduct, and the superiority of our general plan of politics.

If your lordship should see things in this light, you will of course perceive, too, the necessity of proceeding regularly, and with your whole force; and that this great affair of America is to be taken up as a business. I remember that when your lordship collected your strength upon some capital objects, such as the *nullum tempus* bill, and that for elections, your way was to choose out six or seven friends, and to get each of them to secure the attendance of those whom they touched the most nearly. Perhaps you will think that something of this kind ought to be done, in the present instance. To act with any sort of effect, the principal of your friends ought to be called to town a full week before the meeting. Lord John<sup>1</sup> ought not to be suffered to plead any sort of excuse. He ought to be allowed a certain decent and reasonable portion of fox-hunting to put him into wind for the

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Cavendish.

parliamentary race he is to run ; but anything more is intolerable. I really do not wish that his place of *locum tenens* may be long ; but whilst our affairs continue as they do, from poor Dowdeswell's unhappy state of health, he must show a degree of regular attendance on business, without which nothing that we can do will be either effectual or reputable ; and it is not only Ministry that will prevail over us, but we shall be a prey to the detached bodies, and even detached individuals that compose our most heterogeneous, unsystematic, and self-destructive opposition. His grace of Richmond ought surely to be as early in town as any ; but he will not, if your lordship does not press it strongly. Other lords attending early, will have a good effect. A great deal of the temper of the people without doors, will depend upon the figure you make in the two Houses.

One cannot help feeling for the unhappy situation in which we stand from our own divisions. Lord Chatham shows a disposition to come near you, but with those reserves which he never fails to have as long as he thinks that the closet door stands ajar to receive him. The least peep into that closet intoxicates him, and will to the end of his life. However, as he is, and must be, looked to, by those that are within and those that are without, it would not be amiss to find out how he proposes to act, and if possible to fall in with him ; and to take the same line in Parliament, though you may never come to an understanding with him in other politics. This I am sure of, that as long as you make no approaches to him, but show yourself always approachable *by* him, you stand in the fairest way to gain his esteem, and to secure yourself against his manœuvres.

With regard to the Ministry, it would be of the greatest service if we could have some timely knowledge of the proposition, or at least of the spirit of the proposition, which they intend to make at the meeting. It would conduce greatly to our acting with some regularity, if we knew who the Ministry were. It is

always of use to know the ground one acts upon. I have great reason to suspect that Jenkinson<sup>1</sup> governs everything; but it would be right to know this a little more clearly. All this your lordship sees is on a supposition of an active campaign. If otherwise, the thing is not worth the trouble. I see I have been long, and, I begin to fear, tedious and troublesome. I will not add to the impropriety by long apologies. Your lordship will be so good to present the best compliments of myself and all here to my Lady Rockingham, and to believe me ever,

My dear lord,  
Your lordship's most faithful and affectionate  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JAMES BARRY, ESQ.

*Broad Sanctuary, Sunday, January 15, 1775.*

MR. BURKE presents his compliments to Mr. Barry, and is extremely obliged to him for the honour he has done him, in his early communication of his most ingenious performance on painting; from several parts of which he has received no small pleasure and instruction. There are, throughout the whole, many fine thoughts and observations, very well conceived, and very powerfully and elegantly expressed. They would, however, have appeared with still greater advantage, if Mr. Barry had attended to the methodical distribution of his subject, and to the rules of composition, with the same care with which he has studied and finished several of the particular members of his work.

According to the natural order, it is evident, that what is now the 13th chapter, ought to follow immediately after the 8th, and the 9th to succeed to what is now the 18th. The subject of religion, which is resumed in the 19th chapter, ought more naturally to

<sup>1</sup> Charles Jenkinson, afterwards created Earl of Liverpool.

follow, or to make a part of the 9th, where indeed it is far better (indeed perfectly well) handled : and where, in Mr. Burke's poor opinion, as much is said upon the subject as it could reasonably bear. The matter in that last chapter is not quite so well digested, nor quite so temperately handled, as in the former ; and, Mr. Burke fears, will not give satisfaction which the public will receive from the rest.

There are a few parts which Mr. Burke could not have understood, if he had not been previously acquainted, by some gentlemen to whom Mr. Barry had explained them, that they are allusions to certain matters agitated among artists, and satires upon some of them. With regard to the justice or injustice of these strictures, (of which there are several,) Mr. Burke can form no opinion ;—as he has little or no knowledge of the art, he can be no judge of the emulations and disputes of its professors. These parts may therefore, for aught he knows, be very grateful, and possibly useful, to the several parties which subsist (if any do subsist) among themselves ; but he apprehends they will not be equally pleasing to the world at large, which desires to be rather entertained by their works, than troubled with their contentions. Whatever merit there may be in these reflections, the style of that part which most abounds with them, is by no means so lively, elegant, clear, or liberal, as the rest.

Mr. Burke hopes for Mr. Barry's obliging and friendly indulgence, for his apology for the liberty he has taken, in laying before him what seemed to him less perfect in a work which in general he admires, and is persuaded the world will admire very highly. Mr. Barry knows that objections, even from the meanest judges, may sometimes be of use to the best writers ; and certainly, such little criticisms may be of service on future occasions, if Mr. Barry should continue to oblige the public with further publications on this or any other subject, (as there are few to which he is not very equal,) and should turn his talents from the practice, to the theory and controverted questions of this pleasing art.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO WILLIAM BURGH, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

*Westminster, February 9, 1775.*

DEAR SIR,

I beg you will not think that my delay in returning you the proof sheet of your most ingenious and most obliging dedication, could proceed from a want of the liveliest sensibility to the great honour you have done me. I now return the proof with my sincerest and most grateful acknowledgements.

Some topics are touched in that dedication, on which I could wish to explain myself to you. I should have been glad to do it through Mr. Mason; but to my great loss, on this and many other accounts, he left town suddenly. Indeed, at that time and ever since, the pressure of American business on one hand, and a petition against my election on the other, left me not a single minute at my disposal, and I have now little leisure enough to explain myself clearly on some points in that dedication, which I either misunderstand, or they go upon a misapprehension of some part of my public conduct; for which reason, I wish, if I might presume to interfere, that they may be a little altered.

It is certain that I have, to the best of my power, supported the establishment of the Church, upon grounds and principles which I am happy to find countenanced by your approbation. This you have been told; but you have not heard that I supported also the petition of the Dissenters, for a larger toleration than they enjoy at present under the letter of the Act of King William. In fact, my opinion in favour of toleration goes far beyond the limits of that Act, which was no more than a provision for certain sets of men, under certain circumstances, and by no means what is commonly called 'an Act of Toleration'. I am greatly deceived, if my opinions on this subject are not

<sup>1</sup> William Burgh, of York, author of *A Scriptural Confutation* (1775) of Theophilus Lindsey's *Apology* (1754).

consistent with the strictest and the best supported Church establishment. I cannot consider our Dissenters, of almost any kind, as schismatics ; whatever some of their leaders might originally have been in the eye of Him, who alone knows whether they acted under the direction of such a conscience as they had, or at the instigation of pride and passion. There are many things amongst most of them, which I rather *dislike* than dare to *condemn*. My ideas of toleration go far beyond even theirs. I would give a full civil protection, in which I include an immunity from all disturbance of their public religious worship, and a power of teaching in schools as well as temples, to Jews, Mohammedans, and even Pagans ; especially if they are already possessed of those advantages by long and prescriptive usage, which is as sacred in this exercise of rights, as in any other. Much more am I inclined to tolerate those whom I look upon as our brethren. I mean all those who profess our common hope, extending to all the reformed and unreformed Churches, both at home and abroad ; in none of whom I find anything capitally amiss, but their mutual hatred of each other. I can never think any man a heretic, or schismatic, by *education*. It must be, as I conceive, by an act, in which his *own choice* (influenced by blameable passions) is more concerned than it can be by his early prejudices, and his being aggregated to bodies, for whom men naturally form a great degree of reverence and affection. This is my opinion, and my conduct has been conformable to it. Another age will see it more general ; and I think that this general affection to religion will never introduce indifference, but will rather increase real zeal, Christian fervour, and pious emulation ; that it will make a common cause against Epicurism, and everything that corrupts the mind and renders it unworthy of its family. But toleration does not exclude national preference, either as to mode of opinions, and all the lawful and honest means which may be used for the support of that preference.

I should be happy to converse with you, and such as

you, on these subjects, and to unlearn my mistaken opinions, if such they should be ; for, however erroneous, I believe there is no evil ingredient in them. In looking over that dedication, if you should agree with me, that there are some expressions that carry with them an idea of my pushing my ideas of church establishment further than I do, you will naturally soften or change them accordingly. I do not know very well how to excuse the great liberty I take, in troubling you with observations, where I ought to speak only my obligations. Be assured, that I feel myself extremely honoured by your good opinion, and shall be made very happy by your friendship.

I am, with the greatest esteem, &c.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

*Broad Sanctuary, August 4, 1775.*

MY DEAR LORD,

Just as I am preparing to return into the country, I find that Mr. Thesiger is setting out for Yorkshire. I did not know, until this instant, that he had not been gone long since. I have not time at present to write to your lordship on the subject of your letter, and the other most material occurrences which have happened since I received it, so amply as I wish. I have been very far from well for some weeks past ; but I am, thank God, perfectly recovered. Indeed, my head and heart are as full of all kinds of anxious thoughts as they can possibly hold. For some time I had sunk into a kind of calm and tranquil despair, that had a sort of appearance of contentment. But, indeed, we are called to rouse ourselves, each in his post, by a sound of a trumpet almost as loud as that which must awaken the dead. I find it very current that Parliament will meet in October. I should not be at all surprised if it were even sooner. If a proposition comes from the Congress, and a proposition certainly will come, they cannot avoid calling Parliament, whether they receive,

reject, or hang it up by treaty. Admiral Shuldham told me that he is not to sail from Cork until the end of September, or very little before it. I really think they may want a sanction from Parliament before they strip that kingdom of the troops, which an express law has provided should be in it. From *this* they cannot possibly replace them, and if they should send Hanoverians to take their place, for this too they must apply for our necessary, but sure approbation. At any rate, I am convinced the meeting will be early, and your lordship's arrangements will of necessity be early also. I have spoken on this subject very largely to Lord John, who will be so good as to communicate my thoughts to your lordship. York races will be a place and occasion very fit for the review of the county, and for the trial, and, what is more important, the direction of their dispositions. We have been seduced, by various false representations and groundless promises, into a war. There is no sort of prospect or possibility of its coming to any good end, by the pursuit of a continued train of hostility. The only deliberation is, whether honest men will make one last effort to give peace to their country. Something of this sort ought to be infused into men's minds, as preparatory to further measures. No time, in my humble opinion, ought to be lost for putting them into this train. For if Parliament meets early, it will commit itself instantly, and then the disease is without remedy for ever. Nothing can equal the ease, composure, and even gaiety of the great disposer<sup>1</sup> of all in this lower orb. It is too much, if not real, for the most perfect king-craft. I shall soon trouble your lordship more largely. We beg our best compliments to Lady Rockingham.

I am, with the most affectionate attachment,

My dear lord,

Your lordship's ever faithful and obedient  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

<sup>1</sup> The king.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO ARTHUR LEE, ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, August 22, 1775.*

SIR,

I am honoured with your letter of the 21st, informing me of the time on which you propose to wait on Lord Dartmouth, with the petition of the American Congress.

I should be very happy to attend you on that occasion, if I were in the slightest degree authorized to do so by the colony which I represent. I have been chosen agent by the *General Assembly* of New York. That Assembly has actually refused to send deputies to the Congress; so that, if I were to present a petition, in the character of their agent, I should act, not only without, but contrary to the authority of my constituents; and whilst I act for them, it is impossible for me, in any transaction with the boards or ministers, to divest myself occasionally of that character.

This, and this only, is my reason for not waiting upon you. I do approve exceedingly of all dutiful applications from the gentlemen of the Congress to His Majesty. I am convinced that nothing is further from their desires than to separate themselves from their allegiance to him, or from their subordinate connexion with their mother country. I believe that they wish for an end to these unhappy troubles, in which, while all are in confusion, they must be the first and greatest sufferers. It were greatly to be desired that ministers could meet their pacific dispositions with a correspondent temper. I ardently wish you success in your laudable undertaking for the restoration of peace, and the reconciliation of our fellow subjects with their sovereign.

I have the honour to be, sir,  
Your most obedient and humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM*August 23, 1775.*

MY DEAR LORD,

When I was last in town, I wrote a short letter by Mr. Thesiger. But I opened all I had in my thoughts so fully to Lord John Cavendish, who was then setting out for the north, that I do not know whether it be necessary to trouble your lordship any further upon the unhappy subject of that letter and conversation. However, if I did not write something on that subject, I should be incapable of writing at all. It has, I confess, taken entire possession of my mind.

We are, at length, actually involved in that war which your lordship, to your infinite honour, has made so many efforts to keep at a distance. It has come upon us in a manner more disagreeable and unpromising than the most gloomy prognostic had ever foretold it. Your lordship's observation on the general temper of the nation at this crisis, is certainly just. If any indication is to be taken from external appearances, the king is entirely satisfied with the present state of his Government. His spirits at his levees, at the play, everywhere, seem to be remarkably good. His ministers, too, are perfectly at their ease. Most of them are amusing themselves in the country, while England is disfurnished of its forces in the face of armed Europe, and Gibraltar and Minorca are delivered over to the custody of foreigners. They are at their ease relative to the only point which could give them anxiety,—they are assured of their places.

As to the good people of England, they seem to partake every day, more and more, of the character of that administration which they have been induced to tolerate. I am satisfied, that within a few years, there has been a great change in the national character. We seem no longer that eager, inquisitive, jealous, fiery people, which we have been formerly, and which we have been a very short time ago. The people look

back, without pleasure or indignation ; and forward, without hope or fear. No man commends the measures which have been pursued, or expects any good from those which are in preparation ; but it is a cold, languid opinion, like what men discover in affairs that do not concern them. It excites to no passion ; it prompts to no action.

In all this state of things I find my observation and intelligence perfectly agree with your lordship's. In one point, indeed, I have the misfortune to differ. I do not think that weeks, or even months, or years, will bring the monarch, the ministers, or the people, to feeling. To bring the people to a feeling, such a feeling, I mean, as tends to amendment, or alteration of system, there must be plan and management. All direction of public humour and opinion must originate in a few. Perhaps a good deal of that humour and opinion must be owing to such direction. Events supply materials ; times furnish dispositions ; but conduct alone can bring them to bear to any useful purpose. I never yet knew an instance of any general temper in the nation, that might not have been tolerably well traced to some particular persons. If things are left to themselves, it is my clear opinion that a nation may slide down fair and softly from the highest point of grandeur and prosperity to the lowest state of imbecility and meanness, without any one's marking a particular period in this declension, without asking a question about it, or in the least speculating on any of the innumerable acts which have stolen in this silent and insensible revolution. Every event so prepares the subsequent, that, when it arrives, it produces no surprise, nor any extraordinary alarm. I am certain that if pains, great and immediate pains, are not taken to prevent it, such must be the fate of this country. We look to the merchants in vain—they are gone from us, and from themselves. They consider America as lost, and they look to Administration for an indemnity. Hopes are accordingly held out to them that some equivalent for their debts will be provided. In the meantime, the

leading men among them are kept full fed with contracts, and remittances, and jobs of all descriptions; and they are indefatigable in their endeavours to keep the others quiet, with the prospect of their share in those emoluments, of which they see their advisers already so amply in possession. They all, or the greatest number of them, begin to snuff the cadaverous *haut gout* of lucrative war. War, indeed, is become a sort of substitute for commerce. The freighting business never was so lively, on account of the prodigious taking up for transport service. Great orders for provisions and stores of all kinds, new clothing for the troops. and the intended six thousand Canadians, puts life into the woollen manufacture; and a number of men of war, ordered to be equipped, has given a pretence for such a quantity of nails and other iron work, as to keep the midland parts tolerably quiet. All this, with the incredible increase of the northern market since the peace between Russia and the Porte, keeps up the spirits of the mercantile world, and induces them to consider the American War, not so much their calamity, as their resource in an inevitable distress. This is the state of *most*, not of *all* the merchants.

All this, however, would not be of so much consequence. The great evil and danger will be the full and decided engagement of Parliament in this war. Then we shall be thoroughly dipped, and then there will be no way of getting out, but by disgracing England, or enslaving America. In that state, Ministry has a lease of power, as long as the war continues. The hinge between war and peace is, indeed, a dangerous juncture to ministers; but a determined state of the one or the other, is a pretty safe position. When their cause, however absurdly, is made the cause of the nation, the popular cry will be with them. The style will be, that their hands must be strengthened by an unreserved confidence. When that cry is once raised, and raised it infallibly will be, if not prevented, the puny voice of reason will not be heard. As sure as we have now an existence, if the meeting of Parliament should catch

your lordship and your friends in an unprepared state, nothing but disgrace and ruin can attend the cause you are at the head of. Parliament will plunge over head and ears. They will vote the war with every supply of domestic and foreign force. They will pass an Act of Attainder ;—they will lay their hands upon the press. The ministers will even procure addresses from those very merchants, who, last session, harassed them with petitions ; and then,—what is left for us, but to spin out of our bowels, under the frowns of the court and the hisses of the people, the little slender thread of a peevish and captious opposition, unworthy of our cause and ourselves, and without credit, concurrence, or popularity in the nation !

I hope I am as little awed out of my senses by the fear of vulgar opinion, as most of my acquaintance. I think, on a fair occasion, I could look it in the face ; but speaking of the prudential consideration, we know that all opposition is absolutely crippled, if it can obtain no kind of support without doors. If this should be found impracticable, I must revert to my old opinion, that much the most effectual, and much the most honourable course is, without the obligation of a formal secession, to absent ourselves from Parliament. My experience is worth nothing, if it has not made it as clear to me as the sun, that, in affairs like these, a feeble opposition is the greatest service which can be done to Ministry ; and surely, if there be a state of decided disgrace, it is to add to the power of your enemies by every step you take to distress them.

I am confident that your lordship considers my importunity with your usual goodness. You will not attribute my earnestness to any improper cause. I shall, therefore, make no apology for urging, again and again, how necessary it is for your lordship and your great friends, most seriously to take under immediate deliberation, what you are to do in this crisis. Nothing like it has happened in your political life. I protest to God, I think that your reputation, your duty, and the duty and honour of us all, who

profess your sentiments, from the highest to the lowest of us, demand at this time one honest, hearty effort, in order to avert the heavy calamities that are impending; to keep our hands from blood, and, if possible, to keep the poor, giddy, thoughtless people of our country from plunging headlong into this impious war. If the attempt is necessary, it is honourable. You will, at least, have the comfort that nothing has been left undone. on your part, to prevent the worst mischief that can befall the public. Then, and not before, you may shake the dust from your feet, and leave the people and their leaders to their own conduct and fortune.

I see, indeed, many, many difficulties in the way; but we have known as great, or greater, give way to a regular series of judicious and active exertions. This is no time for taking public business in their course and order, and only as a part in the scheme of life, which comes and goes at its proper periods and is mixed in with occupations and amusements. It calls for the whole of the best of us; and everything else, however just or even laudable at another time, ought to give way to this great, urgent, instant concern. Indeed, my dear lord, you are called upon in a very peculiar manner. America is yours. You have saved it once, and you may very possibly save it again. The people of that country are worth preserving; and preserving, if possible, to England. I believe your lordship remembers that last year or the year before, I am not sure which, you fixed your quarters for awhile in London, and sent circular letters to your friends, who were concerned in the business on which you came to town. It was on occasion of the Irish absentee-tax. Your friends met, and the attempt was defeated. It may be worth your lordship's consideration, whether you ought not, as soon as possible, to draw your principal friends together. It may be then examined, whether a larger meeting might not be expedient, to see whether some plan could not be thought of for doing something in the counties and towns. The October meeting at Newmarket will be too late in the year, and then the

business of the meeting would take up too much time from the other.

It might be objected to doing anything in this immature condition of the public temper, that the interests of your lordship's friends might suffer in making an attempt, which might be vigorously and rather generally opposed and counterworked. On ordinary occasions this might be a matter of very serious consideration. The risk ought to be proportioned to the object ; but this is no ordinary occasion. In the first place. I lay it down that the present state of opposition is so bad, that the worst judged and most untimely exertions would only vary the mode of its utter dissolution. Such a state of things justifies every hazard. But, supposing our condition better, what is an interest cultivated for, but its aptness for public purposes ? And for what public purpose do gentlemen wait, that will be more worthy of the use of all the interests they have ? I should certainly consider the affair as desperate, if your success in such an effort depended on anything like a unanimous concurrence in the nation. But in times of trouble this is impossible. In such times it is not necessary. A minority cannot make or carry on a war ; but a minority, well composed and acting steadily, may clog a war in such a manner, as to make it not very easy to proceed. When you once begin to show yourselves, many will be animated to join you, who are now faint and uncertain. Your adversaries will raise the spirit of your friends ; and the very contest will excite that concern and curiosity in the nation, the want of which is now the worst part of the public distemper.

Lord John has given your lordship an account of the scheme we talked over, for reviving the importance of the city of London, by separating the sound from the rotten contract-hunting part of the mercantile interest, uniting it with the corporation, and joining both to your lordship. There are now some facilities attending such a design. Lord Chatham is, in a manner, out of the question ; and the court have lost, in him, a sure

instrument of division in every public contest. Baker was chiefly relied on for our main part in this work. He was willing to do his part; but, lo! he is called away to another part; and if he is not yet married to Miss Conyers, he will in a very few days. This puts us back. Nothing I believe can be done in it, till the Duke of Portland comes to town; and then we shall have a centre to turn upon. Hand, of Leeds, and some other friends, might feel the pulse of the people of Leeds, and the adjacent country. Jack Lee would not let his assistance be wanting on such an occasion, and in such a cause; but if Sir George Savile could be persuaded to come forward . . .

I must instantly set off for Bristol. The enclosed will let your lordship see the necessity of it. The horrid expense of these expeditions would keep me at home; but that city is going headlong to the dust, through the manœuvres of the court, and of the Tory party; but principally through the absurd and paltry behaviour of my foolish colleague. I shall be there on the 28th for the assizes; as appearing to go on a particular occasion, may give me an excuse for not continuing long in that quarter.

I have seen J. D. and Penn. The former, I believe, has suffered himself to be made a tool; your lordship will soon see him. The latter is steady for America. His account of the determined spirit and resolution of the people there, agrees with that which we have generally received. He brings a very decent and manly petition from the Congress. It mentions no specific conditions, but, in general, it is for peace. Lord Chatham is the idol, as usual. I find by Penn that, in America, they have scarce any idea of the state of men and parties here, nor who are their friends or foes. To this he attributes much of their nonsense about the Declaratory Act.

Just as I finished this sentence, the paper gives an account (to which I cannot help giving some credit) that a great battle is fought near Boston, to the

disadvantage of the unhappy Americans. Though this would add much to the difficulties of our present conduct, it makes no change in the necessity of doing something effectual before the meeting of Parliament.

Your lordship will have the goodness to present, &c., &c.

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE DUKE OF  
RICHMOND

*September 26, 1775.*

MY DEAR LORD,

I should hardly take the liberty of troubling your grace at this time, if I were not most thoroughly persuaded that there is a very particular call of honour and conscience on all those of your grace's situation, and of your sentiments, to do something towards preventing the ruin of your country, which, if I am not quite visionary, is approaching with the greatest rapidity. There is a short interval between this and the meeting of Parliament. Much may depend upon the use which shall be made of it.

I am perfectly sensible of the greatness of the difficulties, and the weakness and fewness of the helps, in every public affair which you can undertake. I am sensible, too, of the shocking indifference and neutrality of a great part of the nation. But a speculative despair is unpardonable, where it is our duty to act. I cannot think the people at large wholly to blame; or, if they were, it is to no purpose to blame them. For God's sake, my dear lord, endeavour to mend them. I must beg leave to put you in mind, without meaning, I am sure, to censure the body of our friends, much less the most active among them,—but I must put you in mind, that no regular or sustained endeavours of any kind have been used to dispose the people to a better sense of their condition. Any election must be lost, any family interest in a county would melt away, if greater pains,—infinitely greater, were not employed to carry on

and support them, than have ever been employed in this end and object of all elections, and in this most important interest of the nation and of every individual in it. The people are not answerable for their present supine acquiescence ; indeed they are not. God and nature never made them to think or to act without guidance and direction. They have obeyed the only impulse they have received. When they resist such endeavours as ought to be used by those, who by their rank and fortune in the country, by the goodness of their characters, and their experience in their affairs, are their natural leaders, then it will be time enough to despair, and to let their blood lie upon their own heads. I must again beg your grace not to think that, in excusing the people, I mean to blame our friends. Very far from it. Our inactivity has arisen solely from a natural and most pardonable error, (an error, however,) that it was enough to attend diligently, and to be active in Parliament.

But you will say,—Why all this ?—why now ?—why to me ? I will tell you. It is, that your grace can do more than anybody else at all times ; at this time nobody but your grace can do what I apprehend to be for the most essential service to the public.

Ireland is always a part of some importance in the general system ; but Ireland never was in the situation of real honour, and real consequence, in which she now stands. She has the balance of the empire, and, perhaps, its fate for ever in her hands. If the Parliament which is shortly to meet there should interpose a friendly *mediation*,—should send a pathetic address to the king, and a letter to both Houses of Parliament here, it is impossible that they should not succeed. If they should only add to this, a *suspension* of extraordinary grants and supplies, for troops employed *out* of the kingdom,—in effect, employed against their own clearest rights and privileges,—they would preserve the whole empire from a ruinous war, and with a saving, rather than expense, prevent this infatuated country from establishing a plan which tends to its own ruin, by

enslaving all its dependencies. Ministry would not like to have a contest with the whole empire upon their hands at once. I have not the most enthusiastic opinion of the dignity of thinking which prevails in Ireland; but if pains are taken, they cannot be so unnatural as to refuse one kind word towards peace; or not to suspend in this crisis, for a few moments, the rage and lust of granting;—not to delay, at least, the exhausting of their own purses, for the purpose of destroying their own liberties. Your grace, closely connected with the first peer and the first commoner of that kingdom, and who may have as much influence as you please upon both, can do this business effectually. Ponsonby is in opposition. If these three unite heartily, —(why should they not?)—they will carry a point which will send them with infinite popularity to the approaching general election. Here the Cavendishes may be greatly useful; and they are in all respects the men most natural, and in all respects the best adapted, to co-operate with your grace's endeavours. This is truly a great point; and far, very far, from being desperate in proper hands. I wish most earnestly to see your grace in London. Surely no time ought to be lost. I thought it necessary to attend to my little department. I paid a visit to Bristol. The Tories and courtiers are powerful there, but not omnipotent. The corporation is their principal strength; but hitherto they have been defeated in their attempts to obtain an address from thence. Our friends were dejected, but not alienated. By putting things into a little train, we are in a better posture and in more heart. If the enemy should succeed in the corporation, the town at large will show better dispositions. We do not despair, and we will work even when we do. A little committee is appointed there, to correspond and carry on business with method and regularity.

Some steps are taking towards doing the same thing in London. Baker has done his duty as he ought. With assistance, countenance, and counsel, we may be useful; not otherwise.

I beg pardon for this long and unmanaged letter. I am on thorns. I cannot, at my ease, see Russian barbarism let loose to waste the most beautiful object that ever appeared upon this globe. Adieu, my dear lord ; you want nothing but to be sensible of all your importance.

I am, with the greatest truth,  
My dear lord,  
Your grace's ever obedient and affectionate  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE MARQUIS OF  
ROCKINGHAM

October 17, 1775.

MY DEAR LORD,

I was engaged all yesterday evening, or I had intended to call at Grosvenor Square. This morning I must look over several African papers. This is the cause of my troubling your lordship in this manner.

Lord Chatham's coming out is always a critical thing to your lordship. But even if he should not attack, as it is possible he may not, would it be right for your lordship, in a great American affair, to let him and his partisans have the whole field to themselves ? If he is tender of you, you will naturally be tender of him. But a gentle hint of a wish. that *Parliament* should lay the foundation rather than the *Crown* ;—and that as taxation was the great ground of the quarrel, the co-operation of the *House of Commons*, if not the origination there, would be a necessary part of a good plan ;—and that the *Crown* would want both authority and credit without some previous resolution of that House ;—(that proposition, Lord John's, had been made and rejected ;)—these would be, I think, proper hints to add to what your lordship had been thinking of. But if the thing is even tolerably right, your lordship might express your wish to concur in it.

Ever most faithfully your lordship's servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

*March, 1776.*

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I do not know which was best in the intention, the zeal of our worthy friend for a good public cause, or yours for a friend whom you love for the natural reason of having obliged him.<sup>1</sup> I ought not, perhaps, to put a public and private cause upon a par; but there is so much belonging to goodness in the latter, that it compensates for the superior dignity in the former; and whatever besides is wanting to make the scale even, is thrown in by a man's partiality to himself. Be that as it may, pray, my dear Champion, do not let these little disputes go beyond the heat of the moment, or leave any sort of soreness behind them. If we do, we play the game of that unhappy set of men whose business is, and ever has been, to divide the men whose cause they pretended to be engaged in. It is to this point all their speeches, writings, and intrigues of all sorts, tend. They have been hitherto, in some sort, disappointed;—disappoint them completely. This I beg may be the case. I should be unhappy and mortified beyond measure, if a difference of opinion on a point, after all, of mere speculation, should produce the least coolness between those who for every public and every private reason, should live in the warmest friendship, and who are mutually deserving it from each other, and from everybody else. What is all this matter? Those who wished to quiet America by concession, thought it best to make that concession at the least possible diminution of the reputation and authority of this country. This was the principle of

<sup>1</sup> This letter refers to an amicable altercation, carried perhaps to the very verge of a quarrel, between Mr. Champion and a Bristol friend of Burke's, who blamed him for having supported the Act declaring the right of Great Britain to legislate for her colonies in all cases whatsoever, which was passed during the administration of Lord Rockingham at the same time as the repeal of the Stamp Act.

those who acted in a responsible situation for that measure, in 1766. In this possibly they were wrong. Others thought they ought rather to have convicted their country of robbery, and to have given up the object, not as a liberal donation, but as a restitution of stolen goods. They thought that there were *speculative* bounds, with regard to legislative power, on which they could maintain one part whilst they abandoned others. They thought it dangerous to trust themselves with indefinite powers. They had reason; because they made such use of them, in a twelvemonth after they had denied their legal existence, as to bring on the present unhappy consequences. Now, if any friend of ours thinks, from the theory and practice of these gentlemen, that their hands ought to have been tied from doing mischief, I am sure I am more inclined to praise his zeal, than to blame his error, if he be in a mistake. We are on the right side; it becomes us to be reasonable. Let Dr. Price rail at the Declaratory Act of 1766. His friends have so abused it, that it is but too natural. Let him rail at this declaration, as those rail at free-will, who have sinned in consequence of it. Once for all, my dear friend, be again without a shadow, a relish, a smutch, a tinge, anything, the slightest that can be imagined, of anger, at the honest opinion of one of the worthiest men in the world. All comes from the best cause in the world. Adieu, my dear friend; salute your worthy family in the name of all here.

Your ever affectionate friend, and  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOHN BOURKE, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

*Beaconsfield, Thursday, July 11, 1776.*

MY DEAR JOHN,

I do assure you that I do not want any of that uncritical friendliness and partiality which you ascribe to me, to induce me very much to like and admire what

<sup>1</sup> A merchant in the city of London, whose family,

I have read in the *Gazetteer* this morning. The subject is very well handled ; the language remarkably neat and pure ; and I am sure the principles are honest and constitutional. I do not perhaps go all the length of thinking Mr. Wilkes's promise quite a nullity. It is, I admit, never wise, perhaps not often justifiable, to make such engagements ; and cases may certainly be put where the merit will lie in breaking them. But, if they are made, they ought to be kept ; and the maker ought to have looked into the propriety of making, and the possibility of keeping them, when he made such declarations. Such professors ought to be held tight to their promises, if it answered no other end than to make them cautious in deceiving the people. When, in the issue, it may prove that some part of the deceit falls upon themselves, it is proper to give them no sort of dispensation, and to allow them no kind of evasion. Our friend is perhaps too young to remember the origin of all this professing, promising, and testing ; but he would laugh if he knew, that the wolf is now howling in the snare which he had originally laid for honest men. This traitor raised an outcry among that mob who have now surrendered him over to his and their enemies, against all the honest part of the opposition, because they would not join him and his associates, in disclaiming the fair objects of ambition or accommodation, whenever private honour or public principles admitted of them. We were put out of the question as patriots, stripped of all support from the multitude, and the alternative wildly and wickedly put between those who disclaimed all employments, and the mere creatures of the court. They would hear of nobody else. So that nothing has happened, but what they have chosen and prepared. Whenever they fail, the court must profit. I remember that the Shelburne faction acted just in the same manner ; until, having overloaded the stomachs of their adherents, they were vomited up with loathing and disgust. It was descended from the same Norman stock as that of Edmund Burke, had settled in the county of Mayo.

but a few months after Lord Shelburne had told me, gratis, (for nothing led to it,) that the people (always meaning the common people of London) were never in the wrong, that he and all his friends were driven with scorn out of that city. However, I admit, with our worthy friend, that the baseness and corruptness of Mr. Oliver and the livery, is not much the less for the villany of him whom they have abandoned the first moment he could hope to derive, from their protection, ease and comfort for his age. Let me wish my young friend, at his entrance into life, to draw a useful lesson from the unprincipled behaviour of a corrupt and licentious people: that is, never to sacrifice his principles to the hope of obtaining their affections: to regard and wish them well, as a part of his fellow creatures, whom his best instincts and his highest duties lead him to love and serve, but to put as little trust in them as in princes. For what inward resource has he, when turned out of courts or hissed out of town halls, who has made their opinions the only standard of what is right, and their favour the sole means of his happiness? I have heard as yet nothing about our future engagement. Possibly the servant I have sent to Lord Rockingham may arrive before the post goes out. He is arrived, and I have no answer. Lord Rockingham was not in town.

I am, with the best regards of all here,

Dear Bourke,

Ever affectionately yours,

EDM. BURKE.

Our love to the occasionalist, but not server of occasions.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO A MEMBER OF THE  
BELL CLUB, BRISTOL

*Beaconsfield, October 31, 1777.*

DEAR SIR,

You will be so good as to present my best and most affectionate compliments to our friends and fellow members of the Bell Club, and assure them of my real

concern that my affairs, and the advanced and uncertain season of the year, will not permit me to make one among them, in their good-natured and cheerful enjoyment of our annual festival.

The fourth of November can never return without giving me a pleasing sense of the high honour I received on that day. It renews in my memory the obligations which I have to so many worthy friends ;—and what is better, it revives and refreshes in my mind those principles to which I originally was indebted for their favour. I wish that on all sides we may never forget them. A season somewhat cloudy may try our patience and perseverance for a time ; but I trust that a time will come, when we may act with a little more success, because with a little more assistance from several of our countrymen ; from whom, by mistakes and misconceptions of our meaning, we have been divided ; and when a bitter experience has taught to several those lessons of prudence and moderation which they would not submit to learn from reason and foresight.

But whether the disposition of the conductors or abettors of the present measures shall alter or not, I trust that you will always find *me* upon the same ground ; a well-wisher to the peace of my country, and a steady friend to the liberties of all parts of it, according to the best notions which so limited a capacity as mine, is capable of forming on this great subject. I will continue, to the best of my judgement, to act as I have done ; and I have no doubt that I shall meet my friends in Parliament, animated with their ancient sentiments, and ready to take such a part of vigilant observation, or vigorous action, as the time and circumstances shall require from honest experienced men, who govern their principles by the truth of things, and direct their conduct by their opportunities. Our task is difficult ; we shall certainly do our best. But you ought not solely to rely on us ; for be assured, that it is not either the Members of Parliament, or the men in any other public capacity, that have made or kept a people safe and free, if they were wanting to them-

selves. If members are honest, they deserve, and I am sure they will want support ; if they are corrupt, they merit, and I am sure they ought to have blame and reprehension. We are like other men, who all want to be moved by praise or shame ; by reward and punishment. We must be encouraged by our constituents, and we must be kept in awe of them, or we never shall do our duty as we ought. Believe me, it is a great truth, that there never was, for any long time, a corrupt representative of a virtuous people ; or a mean, sluggish, careless people that ever had a good government of any form. If it be true in any degree, that the governors form the people, I am certain it is as true that the people in their turn impart their character to their rulers. Such as you are, sooner or later, must Parliament be. I therefore wish that you, at least, would not suffer yourselves to be amused by the style, now grown so common, of railing at the corruption of Members of Parliament. This kind of general invective has no kind of effect that I know of, but to make you think ill of that very institution, which, do what you will, you must religiously preserve, or you must give over all thoughts of being a free people. An opinion of the indiscriminate corruption of the House of Commons will, at length, induce a disgust of parliaments. They are the corrupters themselves, who circulate this general charge of corruption. It is they that have an interest in confounding all distinctions, and involving the whole in one general charge. They hope to corrupt private life by the example of the public ; and having produced a despair, from a supposed general failure of principles, they hope that they may persuade you, that since it is impossible to do any good, you may as well have your share in the profits of doing ill.

Where there are towards six hundred persons, with much temptation and common frailty, many will undoubtedly be moved from the line of duty. But I have told you before, and I am not afraid to repeat it, that there are many more amongst us who are free from

all sorts of corruption, and of a more excellent public spirit, than could well be expected. Since there is this difference, it is the business of the constituents to distinguish what it is the policy of some to confound. When you find men that you ought to trust, you must give them support ; else it is not them that you desert, but yourselves that you betray. Nor is it at all difficult to make this distinction. The way to do it is quite plain and simple. It is to be attentive to the conduct of men, and to judge of them by their actions, and by nothing else.

It is true that many of our brethren, from their habits of life, and their not being on the actual scene of business, are not capable of forming an opinion upon every several question of law or politics, or, of course, of determining on a man's conduct with relation to such questions. But every man in the club, and every man in the same situation in the kingdom, is perfectly capable, as capable as if he were a Minister of State or a Chief Justice, of determining whether public men look most to their own interest or to yours ; or whether they act a uniform, clear, manly part in their station : whether the main drift of their counsels, for any series of years, be wise or foolish, or whether things go well or ill in their hands.

You will, therefore, not listen to those who tell you that these matters are above you, and ought to be left entirely to those into whose hands the king has put them. The public interest is more your business than theirs ; and it is from want of spirit, and not from want of ability, that you can become wholly unfit to argue or to judge upon it. For in this very thing lies the difference between freemen and those that are not free. In a free country every man thinks he has a concern in all public matters ; that he has a right to form and a right to deliver an opinion upon them. They sift, examine, and discuss them. They are curious, eager, attentive, and jealous ; and by making such matters the daily subjects of their thoughts and discoveries, vast numbers contract a very tolerable

knowledge of them, and some a very considerable one. And this it is that fills free countries with men of ability in all stations. Whereas, in other countries, none but men whose office calls them to it having much care or thought about public affairs, and not daring to try the force of their opinions with one another, ability of this sort is extremely rare in any station of life. In free countries there is often found more real public wisdom and sagacity in shops and manufactories, than in the cabinets of princes in countries where none dares to have an opinion until he comes into them. Your whole importance, therefore, depends upon a constant discreet use of your own reason ; otherwise you and your country sink to nothing. If upon any particular occasion you should be roused, you will not know what to do. Your fire will be a fire in straw, fitter to waste and consume yourselves, than to warm or enliven anything else. You will be only a giddy mob, upon whom no sort of reliance is to be had. You may disturb your country, but you never can reform your Government. In other nations they have for some time indulged themselves in a larger use of this manly liberty than formerly they dared.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD CHAMPION, ESQ.

*Tuesday night, April 14, 1778.*

MY DEAR CHAMPION,

I find that the people of Bristol are about as wise as I expected they would turn out ; that is, as wise as their neighbours are likely to be on this occasion,—neither more nor less. These things are mere trifles, and known to be such by those from Ireland, who seek, and by the ministers here, who consent to them. But they are merely to satisfy the minds of the people there ; to show a good disposition in this country ; and to prevent the spreading of universal discontent and disaffection. If the people of Bristol choose to show

their ill-will to a business which I conceive they will not be able to prevent, they may make enemies without gratifying their passions ; but I shall be very sorry for it. Their showing good humour and an open, enlarged, and communicative disposition on this occasion would have done them infinite honour, and would, in the end, have turned out extremely to their local advantage, as well as to the general benefit. But these things are hid from their eyes. If, in the discussion of the resolutions which I sent, any tolerable number of merchants in any branch ; or, failing them, any number of inhabitants, would send a counter petition, it might help to save their credit in some degree. I am astonished at . . . How have I offended him ? I thought I had done the contrary ; and as to the rest of my friends, I rather fancied they would so much have entered into my views, as rather to have co-operated with me than thwarted me in a matter, in which I must be at least as good a judge as they, though they know the conduct of their particular affairs better than I do. I cannot wish Bristol ill ; and what have I to do with Ireland, further than as it regards the advantage of the whole ? But I shall go on my own way, and they will find the error of theirs in the long run. . . .

We were beat about the lighthouse. Our cause was most just ; but Treasury and Admiralty appeared against us, and we could not stand it. It is rare for Lord North to show himself on a private bill ; but he stayed it out last night. That night, however, he had been shamefully defeated on the bill brought in by Sir Philip Clerke, to drive his jobbers and contractors out of the House. Surely, never minister was, in all ways, more exposed.

Salute from me and Jane Mrs. Champion and yours most affectionately.

Yours most sincerely,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOHN NOBLE, ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, April 24, 1778.*

MY DEAR SIR,

It would always be my wish to devote every leisure hour to my friends at Bristol. When I am not employed in their business, I should be happy in the enjoyment of their company. But, for various reasons, this is not a moment in which I can indulge myself in that gratification. I feel myself something weakened, and extremely fatigued, by the attendance in the most laborious session I remember, since 1768. I want a little rest much more than the hurry of two journeys, which are to carry me to and from debates and altercations. I would, however, very willingly, give up my rest and sacrifice my private affairs, but I fear that a visit from me at this time, and in the present temper of the city of Bristol, would do much more harm than good. The letter I send to Merchants' Hall this night, together with my former on the same subject, and that which I wrote to you a few days ago, contain the whole of what I have to say upon the Irish resolutions. You will consider them with more deliberation when you are not heated by personal discussion. You are, indeed, as capable in every respect of forming a correct judgment on this matter as any man in the world; but I am afraid you have been surprised, and surprised by those who do not wish you as well as I do. I find that the part I have taken is not very agreeable to you; and it is not in the moment of displeasure that one's arguments are likely to be most convincing.

You tell me that you are unanimous in this affair. Unanimity is so good a thing, that if it were purchased only at *my* expense, I should very heartily congratulate you on it. I did, indeed, expect you to be unanimous, but upon principles very different; upon the principles which, in this, as well as in some other affairs, have led us to be unanimous in Parliament. I mean a general and hearty desire to bind up the wounds of our country,

and to provide all that we possibly can towards removing, or, at least, mitigating, the evils which our late proceedings have brought upon the nation. I thought that they whose mistaken zeal had forwarded those measures, would have been forward also to make amends for the calamities which their haste and warmth had produced, by the hearty adoption of a better system; and that those who had always disliked the plan which had been fatally pursued, would have cheerfully lent their assistance in alleviating the mischiefs which they had always foreseen and deprecated. Unfortunately, the patrons of the first scheme have prevailed in Bristol and some other places, and their opposers are converted to their opinions, even by the ill success which has attended them. I confess I cannot see this sort of unanimity with any degree of satisfaction. You are so good as to say that you wish to see me Member for Bristol at the next general election. I most sincerely thank you, and beg leave to add this friendly wish to the innumerable obligations which I have to you already. To represent Bristol is a capital object of my pride at present; indeed, I have nothing external on which I can value myself, but that honourable situation. If I should live to the next general election, and if being a Member of Parliament at that time should be desirable to me, I intend to offer myself again to your approbation. But far from wishing to throw the memory of the present business into the shade, I propose to put it forward to you, and to plead my conduct on this occasion, as matter of merit, on which to ground my pretensions to your future favour. I do not wish to represent Bristol, or to represent any place, but upon terms that shall be honourable to the chosen and to the choosers. I do not desire to sit in Parliament for any other end than that of promoting the common happiness of all those who are, in any degree, subjected to our legislative authority; and of binding together, in one common tie of civil interest and constitutional freedom, every denomination of men amongst us. When God has given

any men hands, and any other men shall be found impious or mistaken enough to say that they shall not work, my voice shall not be with those men. The principles I have stated to you I take to be Whig principles; if they are not I am no Whig. I most heartily disclaim that, or any other, denomination, incompatible with such sentiments.

What interest, my dear sir, have my friends in Bristol, that I should expose myself by a dereliction of every opinion and principle that I have held since I first set my foot in Parliament? *My* voice could not carry the question. The opposition to it on *my* part, and perhaps even on *yours*, will probably be vain; and the only effect which can result from it will be, the taking away some part of the grace and goodwill which must make the chief value of such trifling concessions.

I have written my letter to the Hall, to my constituents of all denominations.<sup>1</sup> This, and my former, I have written to my own particular friends; and I wish these letters, if you please, to be read at the Bush, and the Bell Club.

I am, with the sincerest regard, my dear sir,

Your affectionate and obedient  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*May 25, 1779.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I do most heartily congratulate you on your enjoyment of the greatest good fortune which can attend our time of life. I mean a retreat from care and toil, with the view of a child entering into active life, with a fair prospect, in his turn, of enjoying the same repose, and in the same place. If I had less interest than I

<sup>1</sup> Burke's letter to the Master of the Hall, of the 23rd of April in this year, is given in the 'World's Classics' edition of *Burke's Writings and Speeches*, Vol. II, p. 289.

really have in this situation of your affairs, merely as a situation, it could not fail to give me pleasure. May you grow more and more pleased with the satisfaction which you so well deserve,—both you and your excellent wife ! Give, in my name, all sorts of felicitation to the third Shackleton, who, I have no doubt, will fill his place as well as the two first, and better he cannot. That young gentleman has been always a very great favourite of mine, on account of his excellent good parts, and the openness and liberality of nature that I observed in him. These dispositions will ensure much happiness to you and to himself, and will enable him to supply many virtuous and useful citizens to his country. I hope he will help to fill up the succession of the world, in its progress to better things, public, and private, than we have the fortune to see at this moment. Your solicitude about my son is very kind and flattering to us both. It does not become me to say all I think of him. My partiality may naturally influence my judgement in such a case. But to you, I may perhaps be allowed to express myself, as I think and as I feel, on any subject. I thank God, he much more than answers my hopes of him. I do not know how I could wish him to be in any particular whatsoever, other than what he is. He has been, for some time, in the Inns of Court ; and intends himself for that profession which is so leading in this country, and which has this peculiar advantage,—that even a failure in it stands almost as a sort of qualification for other things. Whether he will ever desire, or ever have it in his choice, to engage further in public affairs, is more than I am able to foresee. If he should, I am sure that your kind admonitions will have their full effect, upon a constitution of mind very well disposed to receive every lesson of virtue. What you say about his engaging in parties may be right, for anything I know to the contrary. The nature, composition, objects, and quality of the parties which may exist in his time, or in the form of commonwealth he may live to see, are not easy to be guessed at. It must be

wholly left to himself, and must depend upon the future state of things, and the situation in which he is found relatively to them. '*Humana qua parte locatus es in re*', is the best rule, both in morals and in prudence ; and the progressive sagacity that keeps company with times and occasions, and decides upon things in their existing position, is that alone which can give true propriety, grace, and effect to a man's conduct. It is very hard to anticipate the occasion, and to live by a rule more general. As to parties, there is much discussion about them in political morality ; but, whatever their merits may be, they have always existed, and always will ; and, as far as my own observation has gone, I have observed but three kinds of men that have kept out of them :—Those who profess nothing but a pursuit of their own interest, and who avow their resolution of attaching themselves to the present possession of power, in whose-ever hands it is, or however it may be used ;—The other sort are ambitious men, of light or no principles, who, in their turns, make use of all parties, and therefore avoid entering into what may be construed an engagement with any. Such was, in a great measure, the late Earl of Chatham, who expected a very blind submission of men to him, without considering himself as having any reciprocal obligation to them. It is true that he very often rewarded such submission in a very splendid manner, but with very little marks of respect or regard to the objects of his favour ; and as he put confidence in no man, he had very few feelings of resentment against those who the most bitterly opposed or most basely betrayed him :—The third sort is hardly worth mentioning, being composed only of four or five country gentlemen of little efficiency in public business. It is but a few days ago, that a very wise and a very good man (the Duke of Portland) said to me, in a conversation on this subject, that he never knew any man disclaim party, who was not of a party that he was ashamed of. But thus much I allow, that men ought to be circumspect, and cautious of entering into this species of political relation ; because

it cannot easily be broken without loss of reputation, nor (many times) persevered in without giving up much of that practicability which the variable nature of affairs may require, as well as of that regard to a man's own personal consideration, which (in a due subordination to public good) a man may very fairly aim at. All acting in corps tends to reduce the consideration of an individual who is of any distinguished value. As to myself, and the part I have taken in my time, I apprehend there was very little choice. Things soon fell into two very distinct systems. The principle upon which this empire was to be governed made a discrimination of the most marked nature. I cannot think that I have been in the wrong so far as the public was concerned ; and as to my own annihilation by it, with regard to all the objects of man in public life, it is of too small importance to spend many words upon it. In the course I have taken, I have met, and do daily meet, so many vexations, that I may with truth assure you, that my situation is anything rather than enviable, though it is my happiness to act with those that are far the best that probably ever were engaged in the public service of this country at any time. So little satisfaction have I, that I should not hesitate a moment to retire from public business, if I were not in some doubt of the right a man has, that goes a certain length in those things ; and if it were not from an observation, that there are often obscure vexations and contests in the most private life, which may as effectually destroy a man's peace, as anything which may happen in public contentions. Adieu, my dear friend ; enjoy your natural and deserved happiness ; renew mine, and my wife's best wishes to Mrs. Shackleton and the young pair. Both Richards join most cordially in them.

I am always, my dear Shackleton.

Yours, affectionately and faithfully,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO DR. JOHN CURRY

*August 14, 1779.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I have this instant received your letter of the 6th of this month. It demands an immediate answer, as it may prevent a business, which is not quite rightly understood, from proceeding any farther. I am satisfied that you, and the gentlemen concerned, are perfectly incapable of meaning any offence to me, and therefore, so far from taking any, I consider the thing as very kindly imagined, and am obliged to you for your intentions. But it is impossible for me, with any agreement to my sense of propriety, to accept any sort of compensation for services which I may endeavour to do upon a public account. If the bill you allude to should come before you receive this, I must return it by post to the gentleman who transmits it. I have attempted to be useful on many occasions, and to various descriptions of men, and all I wish in return is, that if I have been so fortunate as to do them any service, they will endeavour to improve it to the best advantage to themselves. My endeavours in the Irish business, in which I was, indeed, very active and very earnest, both in public and in private, were wholly guided by an uniform principle, which is interwoven in my nature, and which has hitherto regulated, and I hope will continue to regulate, my conduct,—I mean an utter abhorrence of all kinds of public injustice and oppression; the worst species of which are those, which being converted into maxims of state, and blending themselves with law and jurisprudence, corrupt the very fountains of all equity, and subvert all the purposes of government. From those principles, I have ever had a particular detestation to the penal system of Ireland, and I am yet very far from satisfied with what has been done towards correcting it,—which I consider as no more than a good beginning. I am convinced that if some people had acted with the wisdom that became their station, and the fairness

which, even from them, I expected,—in a matter which it was so much their interest to forward,—things would have proceeded rapidly towards a reformation, and that too with great good humour, and concurrence of all sorts of people. But, as matters have been carried, serious difficulties have arisen, and will continue, as I am afraid you will find. I hope and trust you will do your part towards removing them. The gentlemen of your persuasion will go on to recommend your attachment to the government you live under, but not in a factious manner, nor by invidious comparisons with other people which will not be borne. It is a liberty which, I hope, you will have the goodness to excuse, if I recommend to you, that, while you do all you can to approve yourselves dutiful subjects to the Crown, you do not fall into that species of servility, and of blind party rage, with which new attachments to power are commonly cultivated. In your situation, I would be so far a friend to the court, as not to give occasion to every friend to the constitution to become an enemy to me and my cause. To the great liberality and enlarged sentiments of those who are the furthest in the world from you in religious tenets, and the furthest from acting with the party which, it is thought, the greater part of the Roman Catholics are disposed to espouse, it is that you owe the whole, or very nearly the whole, of what has been done both here and in Ireland. I, who know more of the secret history, as well as the public, of this business, than falls to the share of many, can faithfully assure you of the truth of this. The same dignity of mind which induced them to favour those with whom they did not agree, will keep them from demanding, as a test of gratitude from the Catholics, such an adherence as would alienate that power, without whose concurrence, or at least acquiescence, nothing can be done for you. All that I wish is, that you would not return hostility for benefits received; but that you would, in general, keep yourselves quiet, as those ought to do, who, not being yet admitted to the commonwealth, will naturally find it

the best course to interfere as little as possible with the parties that divide the state. I do not say this as if anything were done, by the generality of your persuasion in Ireland, which gives occasion for this caution; but there are a few whose conduct and discourses furnish a ground for it amongst us, or I am greatly misinformed.

I am glad that you have thought of collecting some little fund for public purposes. But if I were to venture to suggest anything relative to its application, I think you had better employ that, and whatever else can be got together for so good a purpose, to give some aid to places of education for your own youth at home, which is, indeed, much wanted. I mean, when the legislature comes to be so much in its senses, as to feel that there is no good reason for condemning a million and a half of people to ignorance, according to act of parliament. This will be a better use of your money, than to bestow it in gratuities to any persons in England; for those who will receive such rewards very rarely do any services to deserve them. Therefore, I recommend it to you, to look very carefully about you, before you make any such use of your money. I do not mean by this, that professional men are not to be considered for professional services; or that, amongst yourselves. you are not to distribute to each other, such helps as may enable you the better to pursue your very just and honest objects.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Charles Street, May 6, 1780.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The challenge in your letter is accepted, and I shall be happy to give you a *meeting* about that season which you find it so difficult to give a name to. I am in doubt whether this letter can meet you before your leaving Ballitore: I hope it may not. I hope too, that if you can come, I may be able to have a day or two at leisure for you. I never remember to have been

so completely overpowered and oppressed by business ; and that of various, and some of it of a very disagreeable nature. Our life is indeed a warfare. I keep up my spirits as well as I can, and whilst I am in action they are well kept up ; but my moments of rest are not always moments of quiet. I do not know anything which would tend to make me forget all the disagreeable things which pass, so much as a few calm moments with you at Beconsfield, if I could get them ; and though I should be happy in seeing any friend of yours, I think we should be rather more at home with yourself ; but that shall be according to your pleasure. When you were here last, we were chained to the town. How that will be at your next coming, I know not ; for there is nothing with us altogether right. But you will see my son, who is a new accession to our society, and not the worst part of it.

By the way, I forget, as indeed I forget many things which I ought to remember, the pretty poem you sent me about Ballitore. It has that in it which I always consider as a mark of genius ;—the turning to account the images and objects that one is familiar and conversant with, and not running at all into repetition or over-improvement (if that were possible) of the images which have struck others, in other places and times. This latter shows that people have little fire of their own, though they may be capable of kindling at the fire of others ; and it does not mark them as good observers, though it may as retentive readers. What true and pretty pastoral images has Goldsmith in his *Deserted Village* ! They beat all ;—Pope, and Phillips, and Spenser, too, in my opinion ;—that is, in the pastoral, for I go no farther. Our own manners afford food enough for poetry, if we knew how to dress it. God Almighty bless you and yours. Remember me cordially to Mrs. Shackleton, your daughter, and the young gentleman that succeeds and revives old Abraham.

Ever yours,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO RICHARD SHACKLETON

*Tuesday night, June 1780.*

MY DEAR SHACKLETON,

I feel as I ought for your friendly solicitude about me and this family. Yesterday our furniture was entirely replaced, and my wife, for the first time since the beginning of this strange tumult, lay at home. During that week of havoc and destruction, we were under the roof of my worthy and valuable friend, General Burgoyne, who did everything that could be done to make her situation comfortable to her. You will hear with satisfaction that she went through the whole with no small degree of fortitude. On Monday se'nnight, about nine o'clock, I received undoubted intelligence, that, immediately after the destruction of Savile House, mine was to suffer the same fate. I instantly came home ;—(for Mrs. Burke and I were both abroad when we received this intelligence ;)—and I removed such papers as I thought of most importance. In about an hour after, sixteen soldiers, without my knowledge or desire, took possession of the house. Government had, it seems, been apprised of the design, at the time when they were informed of the same ill-intention with regard to houses of so much more consideration than my little tenement ; and they obligingly afforded me this protection, by means of which, under God, I think the house was saved. The next day I had my books and furniture removed, and the guard dismissed. I thought, in the then scarcity of troops, they might be better employed than in looking after my paltry remains. My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street, amidst this wild assembly, into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical ; but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw, were rather dissolute and unruly than very ill-disposed. I even found friends

and well-wishers among the blue cockades. My friends had come to me to persuade me to go out of town; representing (from their kindness to me) the danger to be much greater than it was. But I thought that, if my liberty was once gone, and that I could not walk the streets of the town with tranquillity, I was in no condition to perform the duties for which I ought alone to wish for life. I therefore resolved they should see that, for one, I was neither to be forced nor intimidated from the straight line of what was right; and I returned, on foot, quite through the multitude to the House, which was covered by a strong body of horse and foot. I spoke my sentiments in such a way, that I do not think I have ever on any occasion seemed to affect the House more forcibly. However, such was the confusion, that they could not be kept from coming to a resolution which I thought unbecoming and pusillanimous; which was, that we should take that flagitious petition, which came from that base gang called 'the protestant association,' into our serious consideration. I am now glad that we did so; for if we had refused it, the subsequent ravages would have been charged upon our obstinacy. For four nights I kept watch at Lord Roekingham's, or Sir George Savile's, whose houses were garrisoned by a strong body of soldiers, together with numbers of true friends of the first rank, who were willing to share their danger. Savile House, Rockingham House, Devonshire House, to be turned into garrisons! *O tempora!* We have all served the country for several years,—some of us for near thirty,—with fidelity, labour, and affection; and we are obliged to put ourselves under military protection for our houses and our persons. The bell rings, and I have filled my time and paper with a mere account of this house; but it is what you will first inquire about, though of the least concern to others. God bless you;—remember me to your worthy host. We can hardly think of leaving town;—there is much to be done to repair the ruins of our country and its reputation; as well as to console the number of families ruined by

wickedness, masking itself under the colour of religious zeal. Adieu. my dear friend ;—our best regards to your daughter.

Yours ever,

EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE  
OF THE COMMON PLEAS <sup>1</sup>

*Charles Street, June 15, 1780.*

MY LORD,

Before I say anything on business, permit me to congratulate you on your office and your honours. I hope you will auspicate both, by your firmness in the course of real government ; and that instead of bringing the littleness of parliamentary politics into a court of justice, you will bring the squareness, the manliness, and the decision of a judicial place into the house of parliament, into which you are just entering. *Ut tu fortunam.* If you do this, no difference of sentiment or of connexion shall hinder me from rejoicing in your elevation. If I know anything of myself, I have taken my part in political connexions and political quarrels, for the purpose of advancing justice and the dominion of reason ; and I hope I shall never prefer the means, or any feelings growing out of the use of those means, to the great substantial end itself.

I send you a copy of the resolutions I had sketched. You will do what you please with them. If parliament were possessed of its natural authority, the resolutions might be as short as those of Queen Anne's reign, from whence the idea was taken ; but I conceive at the present time it would be necessary to make them a little more argumentative ; but you will best judge which of them it is best to reject or to receive ; or whether they might not be consolidated into one. I imagine this last will not be easy. You see that the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Loughborough.

policy of wording the first of them is,—to let the dissenters perceive that all toleration is on the same bottom. The scheme of the rest is, to mark the security of the church, and the danger to which this protestant fury may expose their brethren abroad.

Forgive me, in repeating to you, that government must speedily come to a decision, and must make that decision known to all those who support it. From a great part of the popular side in a popular question, that decision cannot possibly be expected. But it will certainly confirm several that are wavering, both on your side and on ours; and will put a stop to those loose ideas which are wandering about to find an owner. The idea of reviving departed penalties on Roman Catholics, to reward the rebellion, and other atrocious crimes of their adversaries, I hold to be unnatural; and when it comes to be tried, will be found impracticable. But the House (or Houses) ought, in my opinion, to get the start of any proposition of that kind, by the clear unequivocal nature of their declaratory resolutions. Until this step is firmly taken, the House will continue under the impression of fear,—the most unwise, the most unjust, and the most cruel of all counsellors.

In order to clear the way for government in this business, it will (I dare say you will agree with me) be absolutely necessary for the Roman Catholics to appear before parliament with a moderate and firm petition, asserting the rights derived to them from their innoxious behaviour; and from the solemn stipulation of the state, when the late oath of fidelity and the qualification oath were given to them, as well as to contradict (as I am persuaded they may do with great safety) the calumnies which are the origin of this unheard-of, unprovoked persecution. To have our table loaded with petitions to do wrong to any one subject, without any application on his part to be screened from it and protected in his rights, is a situation of things so unusual and so unnatural,—implying so much guilt or so much folly,—that it cannot fail of producing the very

worst effects. It is that way of skulking, to which, under the idea of a prudent caution, the Roman Catholics have been advised at other times, that has tended in a very great degree to bring that odium upon them, which men, who conceal their faces and are supposed to entertain secret and concealed dogmas, are always sure to excite; men, who hold no other opinions than what were a while ago held by the whole world, and which are now held by great nations, and not only not concealed as mysteries, but publicly avowed, are treated as if they were a new and obscure sect of fanatics, who entertained principles which they did not avow, and were growing thereby into a conspiracy dangerous to all government. I have long had an opportunity of observing the mischief of this ridiculous wisdom of theirs; or rather, which is infused into them by those who advise them, not for their benefit, but for the ease and convenience of the advisers. But in the present case, government is strongly interested that it should not seem to protect those who do not appear fit to be protected; who fly as much from the sobriety of parliament as from the fury of the populace, and who desert and abandon even their own innocence. I can answer for it, that such petitions could not fail of a good effect. What think you of their being advised to petition—for what?—for penalty, imprisonment, and confiscation!

I have seen a publication from Fisher,<sup>1</sup> which tends to throw the load of public indignation, which was falling upon his gang, on persons obscure or untraceable. Be assured, my lord, that this can do no good whatsoever. The credit of that association, which is the true origin of the mischief, can never stand along with the wise and just law that we have passed two years ago. That he, who burned the books of his society, should be suffered to appear as a verbal evidence, to exculpate those to whom they belonged, I believe you will not think so proper. Instead of doing this, in my humble opinion, the names of those who signed

<sup>1</sup> He was secretary to the Protestant Association.

the infamous petition which disgraces our table,<sup>1</sup> should be classed alphabetically, which would serve as a clue for finding their habitations and connexions, and thereby discover their practices. By separating the parchment, and putting three or four clerks to it, it may be done in a few hours. I beg pardon for troubling your lordship at a time when you have probably but little leisure; I shall not add to it by making many apologies.

I am. with great regard and esteem.

My lord,

Your lordship's most obedient and  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

If you please, I will send you the sketch of what I thought a proper petition.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO JOSEPH HARFORD, ESQ.  
(Sheriff of Bristol.)

*Beconsfield, September 27, 1780.*

MY DEAR SIR,

The fatigues of the election are over; and I congratulate you on your return to quiet. I congratulate you, too, on the order, vigour, and spirit of decision, that shortened your work, and rendered the election itself less tedious to the city, and less vexatious and expensive to the parties than it would have been but for your exertions. Give my best compliments on this occasion to your colleagues.

As to the event of the election, it has been just what it *ought to be*.<sup>2</sup> It was the natural result of the conduct of *all* parties, and it may have a tendency to

<sup>1</sup> The petition from 'the Protestant Association', presented by Lord George Gordon on the 3rd of June, accompanied by an immense body of the rioters.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry Lippincott and Mr. Brickdale were returned. Mr. Cruger was beaten by a large majority. Mr. Burke declined.

reform the conduct of *some* of them. The Tories have not acquired a great deal of glory by the victory they have obtained, and by the use they have made of their strength. On the other hand, I am perfectly convinced, that the defeat both of Mr. Cruger and myself was a thing proper and necessary. If I had not been defeated, the Whigs never could be taught the necessity of vigour, activity, vigilance, and foresight. If Mr. Cruger had not been defeated, his friends could not have had the *chance* they now have of being cured of presumption, and weak, crooked politics. *Both parties* could never have been taught the necessity of cordial union, the mischief of gentlemen neglecting to cultivate an interest among the common people, and the madness of the common people's dream, that they could be anything without the aid of better fortunes and better heads than their own. None of us could be *practically* taught these essential truths but by the *aid* of a defeat.

One great advantage towards our converting our loss into profit is, that we have lost neither temper nor credit by it. At present, all our prospects depend upon the use we make of these circumstances. Our numbers, though respectable, are not large; but then, all the flesh we have is sound, and firm, and fit for action; and it is my earnest wish that no accession, however flattering, may be admitted, if it tends more to swell our bulk than to augment our force. If it be, you will find it a weight to carry, not strength to carry away anything else.

One thing, my dear friend, your manly sense will guard you against,—the admitting any *visionary* politicians amongst us. We are sufficiently secured (by our exclusion from the court,) from the *mercenary* of that tribe. But the bane of the Whigs has been the admission among them of the corps of *schemers*, who, in reality and at bottom, mean little more than to indulge themselves with speculations; but who do us infinite mischief by persuading many sober and well-meaning people that we have designs inconsistent

with the constitution left us by our forefathers. You know how many are startled with the idea of innovation. Would to God it were in our power to keep things *where they are* in point of *form*, provided we were able to improve them in point of *substance*. The *machine itself* is well enough to answer any good purpose, provided the *materials* were sound. But what signifies the arrangement of *rottenness*?

It is our business to take care that we who are electors, or corporate magistrates, or freeholders, or Members of Parliament, or peers (or whatever we may be.) that we hold good principles, and that we steadily oppose all bad principles and bad men. If the nation at large has *disposition* enough for this end, its *form* of government is, in my opinion, fully sufficient for it; but if the *general* disposition be against a virtuous and manly line of public conduct, there is no form into which it can be thrown that will improve its nature or add to its energy. I know that many gentlemen, in other parts of the kingdom, think it practicable to make the remedy of our public disorders *attend* on an alteration in our actual constitution: and to bring about the former, as a consequence of the latter. But I believe that no people, who could think of deferring the redress of such grievances as ours, and the animadversion on such palpable misconduct as there has been lately in our affairs, until the material alterations in the constitution which they propose can be brought about, will ever do any mighty matter, even if they should find themselves *able* to carry them.

As to myself, I am come to no resolution relative to my making one in the consultation of these matters. I believe that, without much intrigue, I might contrive to come into parliament through some door or other. But when I consider, on one hand, the power and prostitution of the faction which has long domineered, and does still domineer in this country; and, on the other, the strange distraction, not only in interests, but in views and plans of conduct, that prevails

among those who oppose that faction, I do something more than hesitate about the wisdom and propriety of *my* making one in this general scene of confusion. I will say nothing about that tail which draggles in the dirt, and which every party in every state *must* carry about it. *That* can only flirt a little of the mud in our faces now and then ; it is no great matter : but some of our *capital* men entertain thoughts so very different from mine, that if I come into parliament, I must either fly in the face of the clearest lights of my own understanding, and the firmest conviction of my own conscience, or I must oppose those for whom I have the highest value. The Duke of Richmond has *voluntarily proposed* to open the elections of England to all those, without exception, who have the qualification of being eighteen years old ; and has swept away at one stroke all the privileges of freeholders, cities, and boroughs, throughout the kingdom ; and sends every member of parliament, every year, to the judgement and discretion of such electors. Sir George Savile has *consented to adopt* the scheme of more *frequent elections*, as a remedy for disorders which, in my opinion, have a great part of their root in *elections themselves* ; and while the Duke of Richmond proposes to annihilate the freeholders, Sir George Savile consents to a plan for a vast increase of their *power*, by choice of a hundred new knights of the shire. Which of these am I to adhere to ? Or shall I put myself into the graceful situation of opposing both ? If I am asked who the Duke of Richmond and Sir George Savile are, and what is my own inward opinion of them, I must fairly say, that I look upon them to be the first men of their age and their country, that I do not know men of more parts or more honour. Of the latter, you remember what I said, in the Guildhall ;—and I cannot retract a word of it.

In this situation, with regard to those whom I esteem the most, how shall I act with those for whom I have no esteem at all ? Such there are ; not only in the ministry, but in the opposition.

There is, indeed, the Marquis of Rockingham, and there are some more, with whom I do not think I differ materially; but I am quite certain that, though they make our greatest number, yet it is a number by no means sufficient, with any effect, to oppose the court, with the little or no aid we have from the people. These are my thoughts, or rather a very small part of the inducements which make me content,—I had almost said desirous, of continuing where the larger part of our city was of opinion I ought to continue.

On recollection, I have perhaps gone further than I intended, on the subject of my difference with my friends; and since I have troubled you with so long a letter, I ought to take the benefit of your present patience, and explain myself a little.

As to the shortening of the duration of parliaments, I confess I see no cause to change, or to modify, my opinion on that subject. The reason remains the same. The desires of the people go along with the reason of the thing. I do not know anything more *practically* unpopular. It is true that many people are fond of *talking* on short parliaments, as a subject of ingenuity; and they will come to resolutions on the point, if any one wishes that they should. But when they come to the touchstone,—to the election itself, they vomit up all these notions. You have, I dare say, remarked that (except in one place only) not *one* candidate has ventured in an advertisement, or in a declaration from the hustings, to say one syllable on the subject of short parliaments, nor has any one elector thought proper to propose a test, or to give an instruction, or even the slightest recommendation of such a measure. You know how every one in Bristol feels on that matter; and I have reason to be persuaded that they do not at all differ from the majority of the kingdom.

As to *some* remedy to the present state of the representation, I do by no means object to it. But it is an affair of great difficulty, and to be touched

with great delicacy, and by a hand of great power. I do not hesitate to say, it *cannot* be done. By power, I mean the *executive* power of the kingdom. It is (according to my ideas of such a reformation) a thing in which the executive government is more concerned (in all matters of detail it is much concerned) than it is in short parliaments; and I know that, in business of this sort, if administration does not concur, they are able to defeat the scheme, even though it should be carried by a majority in parliament, and not only to defeat it, but to render it in a short time odious and contemptible. The people show no disposition to exert themselves for putting power into the hands of those from whom they expect the performance of tasks that require a great deal of strength, and that too, a strength regular, systematic, and progressive. If they can find none to trust, there is an end of this, and of all questions of reformation.

Before I finished the first sheet of this, I received your letter, and I thank you heartily for it. I am extremely pleased with the turn that things have taken in Somersetshire, and that solely on account of Coxe; for, as to Mr. Trevelyan, I am not quite certain about his disposition. I find too, with at least as much satisfaction, that you and our friends agree with me about the constitution of our club, and the spirit in which it ought to proceed. Hereafter, and when we have fully cut off treachery, all our measures ought to be healing;—no revenge, and no reproach.

You see in what a way Westminster was carried. There is in that city a sort of Whigs perfectly resembling the corrupt part of ours, and who would have done just as much mischief, if they had been under any head. Fortunately they were not; and, therefore, instead of being detrimental to the cause, their activity rendered them very useful.

Give my most affectionate compliments to all our friends. I hope to hear that Noble is quite well again. He deserves to be so on all accounts. Remember me and my brother (whom I left in town behind me) to

Mrs. Harford and the young ladies, and to Mrs. Hill. When you write to Warrington, do not forget me there. Believe me always, and with unalterable regard,

My dear sir,  
Your most faithful and obedient  
humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

EDMUND BURKE, ESQ., TO SIR THOMAS  
RUMBOLD, BART.

*Charles Street, Friday, March 23, 1781.*

SIR,

I am honoured with your letter and the inclosures which I received on my return very late on Wednesday night. My attendance on the Bengal Committee and at the House has not left me sufficient leisure to thank you for your communication until this instant. Even now, I doubt, I shall not have time to explain myself so clearly and fully as I could wish to do, on the important matter you have done me the honour to lay before me.

The high opinion which, in common with the rest of the world, I entertain of Sir Hector Monro, gives, in my mind, very great weight to his testimony in your favour. The regard too, which I have long since felt for yourself, would naturally incline me to wish that everything in your conduct, during your government, may be found perfectly honourable to you. I am sensible that the state into which the country, where you presided, has been brought by a long train of ill-policy, has made all your proceedings there very delicate and critical; and I am as much disposed, as any man can be, to allow for several errors that are almost unavoidable in that very difficult and embarrassed situation.

Not to engage rashly in wars with the powers of the country, is, in my eyes, an eminent degree of merit in an East India governor; and I am sincerely persuaded, that your keeping out of them was an act

purely voluntary. I feel, as a member of *this* community, and as a member of the community of mankind at large, your merit in discountenancing, as I understand you have done, the present ruinous Mahratta war; and I shall ever acknowledge it as a public service. In condemning the perverse policy which led to that war, and which, before, had given rise to the still less justifiable war against the Rohillas, I do not speak from the smallest degree of prejudice or personal animosity against the respectable person <sup>1</sup> (for such, in many respects, he undoubtedly is,) who was so unhappy as to be the author of both these measures. I rather gave him my little voice as long as I thought it justifiable to afford him the smallest degree of support. I was always an admirer of his talents, and the farthest in the world from being engaged in a faction against him. I assure you, sir, with great truth, that I am also very far from a connexion with any personal enemies of yours, if such you have; and that, in general, I am one of the latest and most reluctant in imputing blame to gentlemen who serve their country in distant and arduous situations.

But since your letter not only permits, but, in a manner, calls upon me to deliver my opinion to you upon affairs of no trivial consequence, you will naturally excuse the liberty I shall take of laying open to you with plainness and sincerity, my thoughts on some late proceedings at Madras.

I have invariably considered the plan of amassing a great body of power in the hands of *one* of the potentates of the country of India, by the destruction of all the original governments about him, as very ill-conceived in the design, very pernicious during the execution, and perfectly ruinous in the consequences. This from the beginning appeared to me very clear in the theory, and every step towards the practice has more and more confirmed me in that persuasion.

I consider it also as very ill policy to set up a power of our own creating, and intrinsically dependent, in

<sup>1</sup> Warren Hastings.

a state of fictitious independency; and not only of independency, but superiority: that wars might be carried on, and great depredations committed in his name, which, in the real acting parties, could scarcely escape the strictest animadversion.

Looking, as I did, upon every *new pretension*, and every *new subject of discussion*, as a means of new abuse of all kinds, I could not help viewing all encouragement to an attempt for unsettling the succession of the ruling families in India in their lawful heirs,—a succession recognized and settled by treaties and solemn acts,—as a measure of a very pernicious tendency: first, to the people, who would be infinitely exhausted by the support of a party, and a force to support this subversion of the regular order of succession; and, next, to the family itself, which, sooner or later, must be extinguished by its dissensions.

Having these and other motives, all originating from the same principles, deeply and firmly rooted in my mind, you will easily see that it cannot arise from the smallest desire of finding fault with any acts in which you have had a share, that I have hesitated about the propriety of a great variety of things lately done or permitted at Madras, as continuing and enforcing the plan of mistaken policy so long predominant there, and aggravating all the unhappy effects of it.

I am unable to regard the acquisition of territory to the company as matter of merit, until I find that, in some one instance, the condition of the inhabitants has been improved by the revolution, or that the affairs of this kingdom have derived some benefit from it. For, unfortunately, in proportion to our acquisitions, both in Bengal and in the Deccan, we find the country infinitely injured; and the treasures and revenues, both of the company and the subordinate powers, wasted and decayed.

The acquisition, therefore, of the Gentoo Circar, seemed to me exactly like the rest of our late acquisitions. I thought neither better nor worse of it, than our acquisition of the country of the Rohillas, or the

revenues of Oude. But when I found that this territory was no sooner acquired, than it was delivered over to the barbarians, and that the whole of that unfortunate people were (as so many others had been) farmed out as cattle, to the second son of the Nabob of Arcot, it seemed to me very evident, that, as long as such an arrangement was tolerated, the natives were put out of the reach of the protection of this kingdom. In that light I could not consider the whole of that transaction, without great doubt concerning the propriety of it in every point of view.

The farming the Jaghire lands to the Nabob, or rather, in substance and effect, to the same second son, a person (to speak the best of him) of very doubtful fidelity to this nation, appeared to me a measure of the same tendency. The original short tenure was undoubtedly too much; and the resumption, and not the enlarging it, would be the plain dictate of humanity and good policy. By these measures, and by others of the same nature and operation, we have not a foot of land, through an immense region, which we can properly call our own; or in which we possess the ordinary means of protecting the people, or redressing their grievances, if ever we should become wise enough to intend it.

Whatever other measures have been pursued in the spirit of these, or which tend, by the oppression of the native princes or people, to aggravate that evil of usury natural to the country, but which is infinitely extended and increased by uncertain demands and unsettled claims, all these appear to me equally exceptionable.

My proceedings in the India House relative to Mr. Benfield, will explain to you in what manner I think myself obliged to consider them. How far gentlemen acting in India are excusable on account of the false systems, or variable systems, which have been prevalent at home, for the mistakes of those employed abroad, I am unable to determine. No man will be more inclined to allow for them than I shall;

and I never will readily hear of laying on one man, that blame which ought to lie on many, if really there should be found any matter of blame at all.

I am more engaged than I can well describe to you, with various kinds of business. But whenever we have both a moment's leisure, I shall be happy to converse with you on this business or any other; though, to speak after my manner, I do not choose, privately, to discuss matters with gentlemen, with whom I may find myself obliged afterwards to differ in public. It might give me advantages, which it would be *impossible* not to profit of, in some way or other, to their prejudice; and that, whether I would or not. To know any man's story that you cannot agree with, is not pleasant.

I have the honour to be, sir,  
Your most obedient and humble servant.  
EDM. BURKE.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE, TO WILLIAM  
BURKE, ESQ.

(At Madras)

*April 24, 1782.*

MY DEAR—MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

Why were you not here to enjoy and to partake in this great, and I trust for the country, happy change? Be assured, that in the Indian arrangements, which I believe will take place, you will not be forgotten, at least I hope not. King gives you a list. I have kissed hands, and gone through all ceremonies. The office is to be £4,000 certain. Young Richard is the deputy, with a salary of £500. The office to be reformed according to the bill. There is enough of emoluments. In decency it could not be more. Something considerable is also to be secured for the life of young Richard, to be a security for him and his mother. My brother is deep on the western circuit, where he has got full as much credit in one or two causes, as he could, or

any man could get. It has been followed with no proportionable profit. He has now before him the option of the secretaryship of the treasury, with precedence in the office. Many people think the figure he has made in his profession, in one cause in the King's Bench, in one upon the circuit, and in one in a committee of the House of Commons, in which he threw out John Macpherson, ought to oblige him to pursue that line, to which, if he accepts the secretaryship, he can never return, in case of a change that may deprive him of his office. He is not in town, no more than the other Richard, who is in the remotest part of the north. All my friends are absent at a moment so important. Oh! my dearest, oldest, best friend,—you are far off indeed! May God, of his infinite mercy, preserve you! Your enemies,—your cruel and unprovoked persecutors,—are on the ground, suffering the punishment, not of their villainy towards you, but of their other crimes, which are innumerable... Resolutions will pass, after the holidays, to secure the Rajah of Tanjore, and to limit the Nabob. Much good will happen. Indeed, my dear friend, your honest and humane labours have not been useless. I shall think of Mr. Ross. I will write at large the moment I have leisure. My best love to Staunton, Boyd, and Dunkin. May God of his infinite mercy return you to us, happy and prosperous, and above all, speedily. Lord Shelburne has the correspondence with the India princes. The company itself is properly under the treasury. I should like that secretary Fox had the correspondence. . . .

My dearest friend, we proceed as we began, in our endeavours to reform the state. A contractors' bill has passed the House of Commons. A bill for taking away the votes of revenue officers has made a considerable progress, and will also pass our House. The great lines of my bill came down recommended by a message from the Crown. I moved, as you will see, the address. We proceed in the same prosperous course in the India reformation. I told you before,

that the Lord Advocate <sup>1</sup> continued in the same happy train of thinking which your early impressions formed him to. His speeches, as well as his resolutions relative to Tanjore and the oppressions and usurpations of the nabob, were such as if your own honest heart had dictated them. He has not yet brought out the whole, but he will bring forward such on Monday next, as will free that unfortunate prince and harassed country from the wicked usurpation of Mr. Hastings. Our select committee has reported; and last night the committee of the whole House has agreed to the resolutions which General Smith, our chairman, moved against Sullivan, Impey, and Hastings. We have already had Sullivan two days under interrogatories about the appointment of John Macpherson to the supreme council. After shuffling and prevaricating, he has at length taken refuge in refusing to give answers which may tend to criminate himself. The resolutions against Rumbold will be moved on Monday next.

(The copy breaks off here.) .

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE, TO PHILIP  
FRANCIS, ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, December 10, 1785.*

I SHALL be happy to see you and Mr. Fox here any day this week; the sooner the better. I shall now say a few words on the business part of our correspondence. I entertained not the least doubt that Mr. Fox would take his part in the Bengal question,<sup>2</sup> which *must* be brought on. He is certainly right:—we ought to be very careful not to charge what we

<sup>1</sup> Henry Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville.

<sup>2</sup> The exhibition of articles of impeachment against Warren Hastings; the first step towards which was taken by Mr. Burke in the House of Commons, on the 17th of February, 1786, on a motion for papers, which was carried.

are unable to prove. I only think it odd, after all that has passed, how he or anybody can make any doubt of our exactness in this particular. If we understand by proof, the establishment of fact by evidence, agreeably to the nature of the transaction and the principles of jurisprudence, I think we can be under no difficulty. Most of the facts upon which we proceed, are confessed ; some of them are boasted of. The labour will be on the *criminality* of the facts ; where proof, as I apprehend, will not be contested. Guilt *resides* in the *intention*. But as we are before a tribunal which, having conceived a favourable opinion of Hastings, (or, what is of more moment, very favourable wishes for him,) they will not judge of his intentions by the acts, but they will qualify his acts by the presumed intentions. It is on this preposterous mode of judging that he has built all the apologies for his conduct which I have seen. Excuses, which in any criminal court would be considered with pity, as the straws at which poor wretches drowning will catch, and which are such as no prosecutor thinks it worth his while to reply to, will be admitted, in such a House of Commons as ours, as a solid defence. Mere impudence, which in all other cases would be thought infinitely to aggravate guilt, will with us be considered as the tone of innocence and conscious virtue. These are difficulties not arising from the nature of our case, but the circumstances of the time ; they are of a sort that no care in the formation or execution of our plan can possibly remove. And in my opinion, after making these difficulties, to show that we are aware of them, they ought to make no part of our consideration. We know that we bring before a bribed tribunal a pre-judged cause. In that situation, all that we have to do is, to make a case strong in proof and in importance, and to draw inferences from it, justifiable in logic, policy, and criminal justice. As to all the rest, it is vain and idle.

Perhaps my plan may not be the best for drawing in the greatest concurrence upon the vote, and making

what is called a respectable minority. I should admit, if there were a prospect of such a minority as is nearly tantamount to a majority, and, in a second trial, is, in a manner, sure to produce one, the plan ought to have numbers in view as a principal consideration. With such a prospect before you, it is very often necessary to take away something from the force of your charge, in order to secure its effect. In the course of a long administration such as that of Mr. Hastings, which has been co-existent with several administrations at home, it has happened that some are involved with him in one sort of business, who stand clear in others, in which again a different description may feel themselves (or friends, who are as themselves,) directly or indirectly affected; to say nothing of the private favours which such multitudes have received, (which makes, at once, Mr. Hastings' crime and his indemnity,) and in which every party, without distinction, is engaged, in one or other of its members. Parties themselves have been so perfectly jumbled and confounded, that it is morally impossible to find any combination of them who can march with the whole body in orderly array upon the expedition before us. With other prospects than ours, I know that we ought to exert all our dexterity in our selection, and not to aim a shot at the hunted deer, except where you are sure not to hit any other. This necessity I have experienced and submitted to (as in common sense I ought) in many instances. But all the reasons for such a conduct failing here, I find myself not in the least inclined to abandon any one solid ground of charge which I have taken up in any report, speech, or public proceeding whatsoever, or which I find strongly marked in the records which I have by me. My reason is this:—A parliamentary criminal proceeding is not, in its nature, within the ordinary resort of the law. Even in a temper less favourable to Indian delinquency than what is now generally prevalent, the people at large would not consider one or two acts, however striking, perhaps not three or four, as sufficient

to call forth the reserved justice of the state. I confess, I partake myself so far of that coarse, vulgar equity, that if I found the general tenor of a man's conduct unexceptionable, I should hardly think the extreme remedies fit to be resorted to, on account of some wrong actions during many years' continuance in an arduous command. Of this I am certain, that a *general evil intention*, manifested through a long series and a great variety of acts, ought to have much greater weight with a public political tribunal, than such detached and unrelated offences into which common human infirmity has often betrayed the most splendid characters in history. Such a series of offences, manifesting a corrupt, *habitual* evil intention, may be produced; and nothing but a series of such facts can furnish, in my opinion, a satisfactory proof of it.

In that case, I am little disposed to weaken my cause, in order to strengthen the importance of an adequate support. Shall we abandon the substance of our charge, (which is in the multitude and the perseverance in offences,) to fall in with Lord Titius or Mr. Caius, when Lord Titius or Mr. Caius are unable to give us substantial aid in the few mutilated particulars they leave us to proceed upon? Our friend, you say, is to consult many. He who is to please many in a business which in the first instance he makes his own, may be in the right to do so, though this perhaps is doubtful. But any man, whose only object is to acquit *himself* properly, ought to abstain from that general consultation, as from a poison. Speaking for myself, my business is not to consider what will convict Mr. Hastings, (a thing we all know to be impracticable,) but what will acquit and justify myself to those few persons, and to those distant times, which may take a concern in these affairs and in the actors in them. Those who may think otherwise, may have (I ought to say, undoubtedly have,) intentions as good as mine, and a judgement much superior for the regulation of their own particular conduct. It might not become a man, situated like

Mr. Fox, to move without a considerable retinue. He is in the right not to appear weak, if possible, because the opinion of strength leads to further strength; and without that strength, the manly scheme of politics in which he is engaged can never become prevalent. In a party light, and as a question to draw numbers, whatever modification we may bestow upon our motion, a worse cannot be chosen out of the whole bundle of political measures. It is, therefore, my opinion that the wisest course for Mr. Fox to pursue is, not to consider it as such. But as my intention is known and declared, and as I never stated it to be conceived in concert with any one, he will naturally support the question, as concurrent with his own opinion, and with his own principles, and not as a point he means to exert strength to carry; for this the known state of the country will be his justification. Mr. Fox, with regard to himself, has nothing at all to embarrass him in his business; but, as he means to call in the aid of other opinions, it is impossible for us to blend ourselves with them. They will not digest several very important matters, which you and I may think essential. They who could wish that nothing at all were done, will wish to have as little done as can be. Do not we know that one or two, otherwise cordially with us, are of the very party with Mr. Hastings, and have publicly made *his* panegyric, and would not suffer even a remedial act, which was supposed to be grounded in some of its provisions on his misconduct? Do not we know that others, who were so far deluded by those who every way betrayed them, as in effect to renew the trust given to Mr. Hastings, after they had accumulated materials for his prosecution, will certainly advise a revision of those matters which they have been at least induced to tolerate? If, therefore, we do not resolve (I mean, if you and I *dually* do not resolve,) to consult only the cause, and not the support, I pledge myself to you that we shall neither have cause nor support. Whereas, if the matter is planned and settled without

them, only taking care that they are well instructed, there are many things which they could never permit in consultation, which in debate they must support, or disgrace themselves for ever.

*December 23, 1785.*

I have sent you the first scene of the first act,—the Rohilla war. You will make it what it ought to be. You will see my view in the manner of drawing the articles; that is, not only to state the fact, but to assign the criminality, to fix the *species* of that criminality, to mark its consequences, to anticipate the defence, and to select such circumstances as lead to presumptions of private corrupt views. By following this method, our resolution (or articles of impeachment, as they may turn out,) will convey a tolerably clear historical state of the delinquencies, attending rather to the connexion of things than the order of time. They will, on this plan, likewise mark out the enormity of the offence, and point to those particulars which may interest the feelings of men, if any they have left; but without something of that kind I know nothing can be done.

Do you want the blue quarto? If you do, I will send it to you without delay, for I shall have no occasion for it. I believe most of the particulars are in the reports of the committee of secrecy. I never read a transaction which contained such a number and variety of misdemeanours. It is a fistulous sore which runs into a hundred sinuosities. I am sure there are more than I have stated; but you are to judge whether there be enough of them marked, as you are of all the rest.

EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE RIGHT  
HON. HENRY DUNDAS

*Gerard Street, March 25, 1787.*

SIR,

I have the honour of transmitting to you the copies of Mr. Anderson's and Mr. Middleton's letters to the Court of Directors. Along with them I send you a copy of my own letter to the chairman, in consequence of this communication. You perceive the manner in which Anderson fights off ; as to Hastings and the rest, probably their answers are not yet received ; but when they come, they will, I presume, be of the same evasive nature with that of Anderson.

The business of the impeachment grows hourly to be more and more critical to the House of Commons, and to all the parties in it. Two things will be necessary,—a strong case and a full attendance. As to the former, it will not be to the interest of justice, or any of those concerned in our common cause, that, upon our nice distinctions, any point strong in criminality and in proof should be given up. It is upon this principle that the charges must be drawn ; and if, upon submitting them to common lawyers and civilians, the best we can procure, it should be found that the impeachment can be maintained on those points, I am sure that not one vote in the House of Commons will be gained by narrowing ground, whilst we should appear with a more feeble and unimpressive cause than that which we are entitled to on the original merits.

In order to bring about the great primary object of a strong cause, the substance of the charge should be either left to my own discretion, or, what I should like much better, that we should find some way of previously settling the plan of conduct. It is but too obvious, that a few words snatched behind the speaker's chair, can never put things on a clear and decisive footing. Public consultations on our legs in the House, must be still more inoperative. This way of proceeding,

in our present situation, is neither right nor safe ; and I, therefore, am obliged to call on you for a full hour's uninterrupted conversation upon what is already done, and what yet remains to do. The aspect of the House of Commons is enough to satisfy me that very good reasons may exist in your mind, why our conferences on this subject should not be very frequent nor very public. The time and place, therefore, you will settle according to your own conveniency ; as to me, I have no managements. If no arrangement can be made with mutual concert, we shall be more distracted by occasional agreement than by uniform difference. In a situation like ours, a temporary confidence of business and accommodation is necessary to people otherwise adverse, who happen to coincide in some one important point. Without such communication I shall certainly proceed with firmness and consistency, as far as my own judgement can serve for a guide ; but I wish to clear myself of all part of the blame which might hereafter be imputed to my pursuing a course which any untoward event might denominate imprudent and unadvised.

As to the material point of numbers, means are using on our side to call in as many as the lax discipline of oppositions can secure. With regard to your side, you will excuse the liberty I take, in suggesting that the idea of wholly separating the man from the minister, if carried substantially into effect, cannot fail of being infinitely mischievous ; however, the internal circumstances of administration may make some appearance of that kind, and for some time expedient. but it ought not to continue over long, or be at all over done ; for if Mr. Pitt does not speedily himself understand, and give others to understand, that his personal reputation is committed in this business, as manifestly it is, I am far from being able to answer for the ultimate success, when I consider the constitution of the late minorities, combined with the political description of the absentees. But I think it, in a manner, impossible that all this should not be felt by

you and by Mr. Pitt. I shall, therefore, only take leave to add, that if ever there was a common national cause totally separated from party, it is this. A body of men in close connexion of common guilt, and common apprehension of danger, with a strong and just confidence of future power if they escape, with a degree of wealth and influence which, perhaps, even yourself have not calculated at anything like its just rate, is not forming, but actually formed, in this country; that this body is under Mr. Hastings as an Indian leader, and will have very soon, if it has not already, an English political leader too. This body, if they should now obtain a triumph, will be too strong for your ministry, or for any ministry. I go further, and assert without the least shadow of hesitation, that it will turn out too strong for any description of merely natural interest that exists, or, on any probable speculation, can exist in our times. Nothing can rescue the country out of their hands, but our vigorous use of the present fortunate moment, which, if once lost, is never to be recovered, for breaking up this corrupt combination, by effectually crushing the leader and principal members of the corps. The triumph of that faction will not be over us, who are not the keepers of the parliamentary force, but over you; and it is not you who will govern them, but they who will tyrannize over you, and over the nation along with you. You have vindictive people to deal with, and you have gone too far to be forgiven. I do not know whether, setting aside the justice and honour of the nation, deeply involved in this business, you will think the political hints I have given you to be of importance. You who hold power, and are likely to hold it, are much more concerned in that question than I am, or can be.

I have the honour to be,  
&c., &c.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE RIGHT HON.  
CHARLES JAMES FOX

[*The latter end of November, 1788.*<sup>1</sup>]

MY DEAR FOX,

If I have not been to see you before this time, it was not owing to my not having missed you in your absence, or my not having much rejoiced in your return. But I know that you are indifferent to everything in friendship but the substance; and all proceedings of ceremony have for many years been out of the question between you and me. When you wish to see me, say as much to my son, or my brother, and I shall be in town in a few hours after I hear from them. I mean to continue here until you call on me; and I find myself perfectly easy, from the implicit confidence that I have in you and the Duke, and the certainty I am in, that you two will do the best for the general advantage of the cause, and for your own and our common reputation. In that state of mind I feel no desire whatsoever of interfering, especially as too great an infusion of various and heterogeneous opinions may embarrass that decision, which it seems to me so necessary that you should come to, and for which I do not think a great deal of time is allowed you. Perhaps it is not your interest that this state of things should continue long, even supposing that the exigencies of government would suffer it to remain on its present footing. But I speak without book. I remember a story of Fitzpatrick in his American campaign, that he used to say to the officers who were in the same tent before they were up, that the only meals they had to consider how they were to procure for that day, were breakfast, dinner, and supper. I am worse off, for there are five meals necessary, and I do

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fox was in Italy when he was informed of the king's illness, and the probable necessity for the appointment of a Regency. He immediately set off on his return to England.

not know at present how to feel secure of one of them,—the king, the prince, the lords, the commons, and the people. As to the first, the physicians, whose report is to settle the state, and who are now, therefore, the men in power,—what answer they will give to interrogatories, as to the nature and probable duration of the king's complaint, the probability of cure, the danger of relapse upon apparent recovery, and the like, I am utterly a stranger to all this. But it is not right you should be long so, for much will hinge on it. It is fit that you should be thoroughly acquainted with their answers, which can be only had by a previous examination. The ministers have probably taken these opinions. The prince, in a matter so interesting to himself, politically, personally, and now as the head of the royal family, has full as good a right to these opinions as these gentlemen can pretend to; and nothing can make it improper for him to have them taken before such persons of weight and consequence in the country as he may choose to call in. I think it will be a crude business, that their first examination should be at the bar of the House of Lords, or House of Commons. Examined they must be before we can take any step,—whether we can confide this examination to a committee of both houses, or whether we ought, or not, to have a committee of actual inspection, is for you to consider. The great point is, in my opinion, not to let the ministers take the lead in the settlement. They are men, undoubtedly, in legal situations of trust, to perform such functions as can be performed in office without resort to the Crown; but the king's confidential servants they certainly are not: and not only the rights of other members are on a par with theirs, but all ideas of decorum, and pre-audience, on the subject of the king, are out of the question. I mention this to you, not as supposing that you and the rest of our friends are not aware of it, but from my having observed, when I was in town, that the ministers were talked of as if things were in their ordinary course; and, our language guiding and not following our ideas

on this occasion, it was supposed that both the communication of the state of the king's health, and the propositions in consequence of it, were to be expected from *them*. This is an inter-regnum; and the suffering of the office people to be considered as persons to whose wisdom the Government is to look for its future form, may be neither quite reputable or altogether advantageous to you. Might it not be better for the prince, at once to assure himself, to communicate the king's melancholy state by a message to the two Houses, and to desire their counsel and support in such an exigency? It would put him forward with advantage in the eyes of the people; it would teach them to look on him with respect, as a person possessed of the spirit of command; and it would, I am persuaded, stifle an hundred cabals, both in parliament and elsewhere, in their very cradle, which would, if they were cherished by his apparent remissness and indecision, produce to him a vexatious and disgraceful regency and reign. But I am going farther than I intended. God bless you. There is a good deal to be done for your security and credit, supposing the prince's dispositions to you to be all they are represented; and that I believe them to be. Your business formerly was only to take care of your own honour. I hope you have now another trust. It is a great deal that the proscription is taken off; but, at the same time, the effects of twenty-eight years of systematic endeavours to destroy you, cannot be done away with ease. You are to act a great, and though not a discouraging, a difficult part; and in a scene which is wholly new. If you cannot succeed in it, the thing is desperate. Adieu!

Yours ever,  
EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO WILLIAM  
WINDHAM, ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, January 24, 1789.*

I STAYED at Brooks' on Tuesday night, in hopes of seeing you, until after twelve. I had a good deal of

discourse with Pelham,<sup>1</sup> who gave me leave to flatter myself that you and he might dine with me, and pass a night here, between this and Monday. We have means of feeding you, though without our cook, but the dairy-maid is not a bad hand at a pinch; and we have just killed a sheep, which, though large and fat, is, I believe, full six years old, and very fine meat. I have already, I think, received some small benefit to my health by coming into the country; but this view to health, though far from unnecessary to me, was not the chief cause of my present retreat. I began to find that I had grown rather too anxious; and had begun to discover to myself and to others a solicitude relative to the present state of affairs, which, though their strange condition might well warrant it in others, is certainly less suitable to my time of life, in which all emotions are less allowed; and to which, most certainly, all human concerns ought in reason to become more indifferent, than to those who have work to do, and a good deal of day, and of inexhausted strength to do it in. I sincerely wish to withdraw myself from this scene for good and all; but, unluckily, the India business binds me in point of honour; and, whilst I am waiting for that, comes across another of a kind totally different from any that has hitherto been seen in this country, and which has been attended with consequences very different from those which ought to have been expected in this country, or in any country, from such an event. It is true I had been taught by some late proceedings, and by the character of the person principally concerned, to look for something extraordinary. With a strong sense of this, my opinion was that the prince ought to have *done* what has been *said* it was his right to do; and which might have been as safely done as was unsafely said. He ought himself to have gone down to the House of Lords, and to *them* by himself, and to the House of Commons by *message*, to have communicated the king's condition,

<sup>1</sup> Probably the Hon. Thomas Pelham, afterwards Earl of Chichester.

and to have desired the advice and assistance of the two Houses. His friends would then have been the *proposers*, and his enemies the *opposers*, which would have been a great advantage. The proceedings in council ought also to have originated from him; whereas we admitted the *official* ministers as the king's *confidential* servants, when he had no confidence to give. The plans originated from them. We satisfied ourselves with the place of objectors and opposers,—a weak post always; and we went out with the spirit (if it may be so called) of *inferiority*, and of a mere common opposition, with the Prince of Wales, Regent in designation, and future King, at our head; he unable to support us, and we unable to support him. Though I went to town strongly impressed with this idea, which I stated to Fox, when I saw him in his bed, and to others, it met so ill a reception from all to whom I mentioned it, and it seemed then a matter of course, that the men who remained in place, (as Pitt and the chancellor did,) without character or efficiency in law, were under an exclusive obligation to take the lead; and some were of opinion that they ought to be called upon and stimulated to the production of their plans, I was really overborne with this, I may say, almost universal, conceit; so much so, that I gave over pressing my own, and wrote to my brother then here, that I found it necessary to give it up, and even to change it; and on this he wrote me a strong remonstrance. Afterwards I was little consulted. This error of ours (if such it was) is fundamental, and perhaps the cause of all our subsequent disasters. I don't trouble you with these remarks as complaining of what was done, or as laying too much weight on my first opinions. In truth, things have turned out so contrary to all my rational speculation in several instances, that I dare not be very positive in what appears to me most advisable, nor am I at all disposed very severely to censure the proceedings most adverse to my own ideas. I throw out these things to you, and wish to put you in possession of my thoughts, that, if

they meet with a reception in your mind, you may urge them in time and place with a force which, for many reasons, (perhaps some of personal fault, or defect, or excess in myself, but most certainly from a sort of habit of having what I suggest go for nothing,) I can no more hope for. I look back to anything that has been done or omitted, for no other purpose than to guide our proceedings in future. In the first place I observe, that though there have been a very few consultations upon particular measures, there have been none at all *de summa rerum*. It has never been discussed, whether, all things taken together, in our present situation, it would not be the best or least evil course, for the public and the prince, and possibly, in the end, for the party, that the prince should surrender himself to his enemies and ours. Of one thing I am quite certain, that if the two Houses, animated by a number of addresses to the prince and of instructions to the members, should be bold enough to reserve all their pretended principles. (as in case of such addresses and instructions they certainly will do,) and demand of the prince-regent to keep in these ministers, I believe it will be found very difficult. if not absolutely impossible, to resist such a requisition. It has always hitherto been thought wise, rather to foresee such an extremity, and to act in the foresight, than to submit to it when it happens; to make peace whilst there is some faint appearance of choice left on the subject, has hitherto been the policy. If that surrender should be thought necessary, then it will be for the consideration of our friends, how to do it in the manner most honourable to themselves, and the best fitted to make an impression on the public; and this, I think, would best be done in the way of a strong, well-reasoned memorial on the subject, advising the prince, for the sake of the public tranquillity, and to prevent further outrages on the constitution, to yield to the present exigence, thanking him for the justice he was willing to do to the king's subjects, and for his equity in delaying so long to yield to so wicked a

proscription as that projected. This, in my poor judgement, ought to be signed by all the lords and commoners amongst us, and possibly by other notables in the country ; and then, without a formal secession, to absent ourselves from Parliament until favourable circumstances should call us to it. I am far from being certain that this method (this of yielding,) would not be the best, considering who the prince is, and who, and of what stuff, we are. But if we choose the other way, which is, at all events, to fight it out against a majority in the two Houses, and a very great, bold, and active party without doors, making, for aught I know, the majority of the nation, then I am sure we ought to prepare ourselves for such a combat in a different manner, and to act in it with a very different spirit from anything which has ever yet appeared amongst us. In the first place we ought to change that tone of calm reasoning which certainly does not belong to great and affecting interests, and which has no effect, but to chill and discourage those upon whose active exertions we must depend much more than on their cold judgement. Our style of argument, so very different from that by which Lord North was run down, has another ill-effect. I know it increases the boldness of some of those who are thus bold, less from the courage of their original temperament than from the air of inferiority, debasement, and dejection, under which we have appeared for some years past. In daring everything they see they risk nothing. Far from apprehending any mischief from our future just resentment, they are not troubled with any degree of present disgrace, or even with a hard word, or a reflection on their character,—two or three trifling instances excepted. I suppose a more excellent speech than Fox's last has never been delivered in any House of Parliament ; full of weighty argument, eloquently enforced, and richly, though soberly, decorated. But we must all be sensible that it was a speech which might be spoken upon an important difference between the best friends, and where the parties had the very

best opinion of each other's general intentions for the public good. Mr. Pitt commended, as he had reason to do, the singular moderation of a speech Mr. Fox had made before, with an oblique reflection on those who had debated in another manner. If a foreseen coalition with Mr. Pitt should make this style of debate advisable for Mr. Fox, the word ought to be given to others, who may bring much mischief on themselves, when such a coalition shall be made, for having spoken of Mr. Pitt's conduct as highly corrupt, factious, and criminal; and, in the meantime, they may be considered as hot and intemperate zealots of a party, with the main springs of whose politics they are not acquainted, so far as to the general style of debate. I will trouble you, on this point, with a word on the use he may make of the degree of strength we possess in both Houses:—We are a minority; but then we are a very large minority; and I never knew an instance in which such numbers did not keep a majority in considerable awe. This was the case in a parliament of recognized authority. But, in the present case, it is universally admitted that the acts of the two Houses are not legal, but to be legalized hereafter, and that our proceedings are not founded upon anything but necessity. The submission, therefore, of the smaller number to the greater, is a mere voluntary act, and not an acquiescence in a legal decision. I see no sort of reason to hinder us from protesting on the journals; or if they prevent us from that, from publishing strong manifestoes signed with our names. Our conduct cannot be more irregular than theirs. If it is objected, that this principle might lead us a great deal farther, I confess it; but then, their principle would lead them farther too; and they have, in fact, gone to ten times worse and more serious lengths against the substance and the solid maxims of our Government, than we can be suspected of going, who, should we take the steps I suggest, only trespass against form and decorum. But whilst they neither attend to form or to substance, and we are the slaves of form, it is

self-evident that we do not engage upon equal terms. I do not dwell upon this point so much for the sake of this measure, (which I wish rather we did not think forbidden than that I pressinglly recommend,) but for another and more serious reason. When I consider the change of Mr. Pitt's language, I am convinced that an intention is entertained of addressing the prince to keep him in power. To the last day's debate, he constantly spoke of himself as virtually out of place, and of Mr. Fox as minister in certain designation. That day he totally changed his note. His friend Mr. Rolle had arrived with his address from Devonshire. Are any on our part to advise the prince not to comply with that address? Or are we to consider ourselves as bound by the faith which Mr. Sheridan has held on the part of the prince, that he will comply with the requisition of the House of Commons? To what to attribute the two voluntary declarations made by Sheridan on that subject, especially the last, I am wholly at a loss. If the prince has authorized him to speak in this manner, all that I have said or have to say, on this side of the alternative, is vain and useless. We must submit, and there is an end of it. Even without this declaration, the difficulty in opposing such an address, though from an House framed on principles directly contradictory to these addresses, would be very great. I should contend as much as any one, perhaps more, for the constitutional propriety of the king's submitting, in every part of his executive Government, to the advice of Parliament. But this, like every other principle, can bear a practical superstructure of only a certain weight. If the two Houses, without any sort of reason, merely from faction and caprice, should attempt to arrogate to themselves, under the name of advice, the whole power and authority of the Crown, the monarchy would be a useless incumbrance on the country, if it were not able to make a stand against such attempts. If, then, such a stand is to be made, my opinion is, first, that the way ought to be prepared for it, by a previous strong

remonstrance to the House of Commons from Westminster, against their whole proceedings. I am told we may depend upon Westminster. If we may, then I think it, from its vicinity, and the habitation in it of so many people from all parts of the kingdom (which make it a sort of general representative of the whole), of more importance than any other whatsoever, if properly used, and if the means are taken, which were taken, on the accession of the present royal family, by the Duke of Newcastle and others, to keep up and direct a spirit capable of seconding their petitions and addresses. I am not, in general, very fond of these things; but on occasions they must be used, and I hope they are not among the *artes perditæ*. They have the monied interest; let us use the interest of those whose property is their freedom. Other places will probably follow; but, so far as I can discern, no attempt has yet been made to do more than merely to prevent the corporations, or people, from appearing against us, Bristol excepted, where my brother and his friends in the corporation attempted more, but did not succeed. I should recommend that the same should be attempted where it might be more likely to succeed; but what I contend for in all these attempts is, that we should not at all hold ourselves on the *defensive*; a part which, in such affairs as these, has never failed to bring ruin on those who have chosen to occupy it. The people, to be animated, must seem to have some motive to *action*; and accusation has more to engage their attention than apology, which always implies at least a possibility of guilt;—it is something abject at best. In order to prevent where we can do no better, or to act where we can act, I am clear that none but a corps of observation ought to attend Parliament. We ought to give over all thoughts of division; and the members who have any interest ought to be sent down to their several districts. It was the present king and the present ministers who have made, and who continue, this parliament out of doors. It is now fixed, and it is for us to take our advantage

of the actual state of the country, which is to the best of their power employed against us ; at least, until we shall be furnished with the means of establishing the constitutional bodies of the kingdom in the degree of sober independence, and decent respect, which they ought to enjoy. Whilst these and other obvious measures are going on abroad, the great security for their success, or the great remedy for their failure, is in the conduct of the prince himself. On that more depends than on all the rest. All his actions, and all his declarations, ought to be regular, and the consequences of a plan ; and if he refuses to comply with the addresses, he ought, once for all, to give them an answer, which should be as much reasoned as his situation will admit, and which will serve for a manifesto. All his written proceedings must be so many manifestoes ; for he will not be in government by being appointed regent, but only in a situation to contend for it. Dead, cold, formal pieces, containing no sentiment to interest the feelings, and no animated argument to go to the understanding, may serve well enough when power is secure and able to stand on its own foundations ; but in this precarious show of government, a party must be made, and it must be made as parties are formed in other cases. There is not one rule, principle, or maxim, of a settled government that would be useful to us,—that of general good conduct excepted. That which I should chiefly rely upon, in all these manifestoes, is a sentiment of dignity and independence, and an indifference to the object unless it can be held on those terms. If this, indeed, be not supported by a degree of courage, either natural or infused, and a *real* resolution rather to forfeit everything than his own honour, and the safety of those embarked with him in the same bottom, to be sure, such a style of speaking would be unsuitable and mischievous ; but if the conduct and declarations are of a piece, I think they can hardly fail of success in the end ;—I say in the *end*, for we deceive ourselves woefully if we are not at the very opening of a dreadful struggle.

All these and everything else, however, depend upon that ; which if nobody has spirit and integrity enough to inculcate into the prince, he is, and we are, ruined. He must marry into one of the sovereign houses of Europe. Till then he will be liable to every suspicion, and to daily insult. He will not be considered as one of the corps of princes, nor aggregated to that body, which people here, more even than in other countries, are made to look at with respect. There must be a queen for the women, or a person to represent one, else *this* queen will have them all. I say this independently of the suggestion concerning Mrs. Fitzherbert, which I know to have great weight, and much the greatest in the extremities of the kingdom. No king in Europe, who is not married, or has not been so : no prince appears settled, unless he puts himself into the situation of the father of a family.

I began this with a notion that I could bring all I had to say into a few short heads ; but I have been drawn into a length that I did not expect. One thing or other has taken me off ; so that I must deliver myself the letter which I thought was to bring you hither. Perhaps what I have thrown down is of little moment ; at any rate it is in safe hands,—it is in the hands of one who will pardon and will conceal my weakness. Adieu,

And believe me ever, sincerely and  
affectionately, yours,  
EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO MONS.  
DUPONT

October, 1789.

DEAR SIR,

We are extremely happy in your giving us leave to promise ourselves a renewal of the pleasure we formerly had in your company at Beaconsfield and in London. It was too lively to be speedily forgotten on our part ; and we are highly flattered to find that you keep so exactly in your memory all the particulars of the few

attentions which you were so good to accept from us during your stay in England. We indulge ourselves in the hope that you will be able to execute what you intend in our favour; and that we shall be more fortunate in the coming spring, than we were in the last.

You have reason to imagine that I have not been as early as I ought, in acquainting you with my thankful acceptance of the correspondence you have been pleased to offer. Do not think me insensible to the honour you have done me. I confess I did hesitate for a time, on a doubt, whether it would be prudent to yield to my earnest desire of such a correspondence.

Your frank and ingenuous manner of writing would be ill answered by a cold, dry, and guarded reserve on my part. It would, indeed, be adverse to my habits and my nature, to make use of that sort of caution in my intercourse with any friend. Besides, as you are pleased to think that your splendid flame of liberty was first lighted up at my faint and glimmering taper, I thought you had a right to call upon me for my undisguised sentiments on whatever related to that subject. On the other hand, I was not without apprehension, that in this free mode of intercourse I might say something, not only disagreeable to your formed opinions upon points on which, of all others, we are most impatient of contradiction, but not pleasing to the power which should happen to be prevalent at the time of your receiving my letter. I was well aware that, in seasons of jealousy, suspicion is vigilant and active; that it is not extremely scrupulous in its means of inquiry; not perfectly equitable in its judgements; and not altogether deliberate in its resolutions. In the ill-connected and inconclusive logic of the passions, whatever may appear blameable is easily transferred from the guilty writer to the innocent receiver. It is an awkward as well as unpleasant accident; but it is one that has sometimes happened. A man may be made a martyr to tenets the most opposite to his own. At length a friend of mine, lately come from Paris,

informed me that heats are beginning to abate, and that intercourse is thought to be more safe. This has given me some courage; and the reflection that the sentiments of a person of no more consideration than I am, either abroad or at home, could be of little consequence to the success of any cause or any party. has at length decided me to accept of the honour you are willing to confer upon me.

You may easily believe, that I have had my eyes turned, with great curiosity, to the astonishing scene now displayed in France. It has certainly given rise in my mind to many reflections, and to some emotions. These are natural and unavoidable; but it would ill become me to be too ready in forming a positive opinion upon matters transacted in a country, with the correct political map of which I must be very imperfectly acquainted. Things, indeed, have already happened so much beyond the scope of all speculation, that persons of infinitely more sagacity than I am, ought to be ashamed of anything like confidence in their reasoning upon the operation of any principle, or the effect of any measure. It would become me, least of all, to be so confident, who ought, at my time of life, to have well learned the important lesson of self-distrust,—a lesson of no small value in company with the best information, but which alone can make any sort of amends for our not having learned other lessons so well as it was our business to learn them. I beg you, once for all, to apply this corrective of the diffidence I have, on my own judgement, to whatever I may happen to say with more positiveness than suits my knowledge and situation. If I should seem anywhere to express myself in the language of disapprobation, be so good as to consider it as no more than the expression of doubt.

You hope, sir, that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it, deserve it. It is not the reward of our merit, or the acquisition of our industry. It is our inheritance. It is the birthright of our species. We

cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind. I mean the abuse, or oblivion, of our rational faculties, and a ferocious indocility which makes us prompt to wrong and violence, destroys our social nature, and transforms us into something little better than the description of wild beasts. To men so degraded, a state of strong constraint is a sort of necessary substitute for freedom ; since, bad as it is, it may deliver them in some measure from the worst of all slavery,—that is, the despotism of their own blind and brutal passions.

You have kindly said, that you began to love freedom from your intercourse with me. Permit me then to continue our conversation, and to tell you what the freedom is that I love, and that to which I think all men entitled. This is the more necessary, because, of all the loose terms in the world, liberty is the most indefinite. It is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish liberty, as if every man was to regulate the whole of his conduct by his own will. The liberty I mean is *social* freedom. It is that state of things in which liberty is secured by the equality of restraint. A constitution of things in which the liberty of no one man, and no body of men, and no number of men, can find means to trespass on the liberty of any person, or any description of persons, in the society. This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice ; ascertained by wise laws, and secured by well-constructed institutions. I am sure that liberty, so incorporated, and in a manner identified with justice, must be infinitely dear to every one who is capable of conceiving what it is. But whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is, in my opinion, safe. I do not believe that men ever did submit, certain I am that they never ought to have submitted, to the arbitrary pleasure of one man ; but, under circumstances in which the arbitrary pleasure of many persons in the community pressed with an intolerable hardship upon the just and equal rights of their fellows, such a choice might be made, as among

evils. The moment *will* is set above reason and justice, in any community, a great question may arise in sober minds, in what part or portion of the community that dangerous dominion of *will* may be the least mischievously placed.

If I think all men who cultivate justice, entitled to liberty, and, when joined in states, entitled to a constitution framed to perpetuate and secure it, you may be assured, sir, that I think your countrymen eminently worthy of a blessing which is peculiarly adapted to noble, generous, and humane natures. Such I found the French, when, more than fifteen years ago, I had the happiness, though but for too short a time, of visiting your country; and I trust their character is not altered since that period.

I have nothing to check my wishes towards the establishment of a solid and rational scheme of liberty in France. On the subject of the relative power of nations, I may have my prejudices; but I envy internal freedom, security, and good order, to none. When, therefore, I shall learn that, in France, the citizen, by whatever description he is qualified, is in a perfect state of legal security, with regard to his life,—to his property,—to the uncontrolled disposal of his person,—to the free use of his industry and his faculties:—When I hear that he is protected in the beneficial enjoyment of the estates to which, by the course of settled law, he was born, or is provided with a fair compensation for them;—that he is maintained in the full fruition of the advantages belonging to the state and condition of life in which he had lawfully engaged himself, or is supplied with a substantial, equitable, equivalent:—When I am assured that a simple citizen may decently express his sentiments upon public affairs, without hazard to his life or safety, even though against a predominant and fashionable opinion:—When I know all this of France, I shall be as well pleased as every one must be, who has not forgot the general communion of mankind, nor lost his natural sympathy, in local and accidental connexions.

If a constitution is settled in France upon those principles, and calculated for those ends, I believe there is no man in this country whose heart and voice would not go along with you. I am sure it will give me, for one, a heartfelt pleasure when I hear that, in France, the great public assemblies, the natural securities for individual freedom, are perfectly free themselves ;—when there can be no suspicion that they are under the coercion of a military power of any description ;—when it may be truly said, that no armed force can be seen, which is not called into existence by their creative voice, and which must not instantly disappear at their dissolving word ;—when such assemblies, after being freely chosen, shall proceed with the weight of magistracy, and not with the arts of candidates ;—when they do not find themselves under the necessity of feeding one part of the community at the grievous charge of other parts, as necessitous as those who are so fed ;—when they are not obliged (in order to flatter those who have their lives in their disposal) to tolerate acts of doubtful influence on commerce and on agriculture ; and for the sake of a precarious relief, under temporary scarcity, to sow (if I may be allowed the expression) the seeds of lasting want ;—when they are not compelled daily to stimulate an irregular and juvenile imagination for supplies, which they are not in a condition firmly to demand ;—when they are not obliged to diet the state from hand to mouth, upon the casual alms of choice, fancy, vanity, or caprice, on which plan the value of the object to the public which receives, often bears no sort of proportion to the loss of the individual who gives ;—when they are not necessitated to call for contributions to be estimated on the conscience of the contributor, by which the most pernicious sorts of exemptions and immunities may be established,—by which virtue is taxed and vice privileged, and honour and public spirit are obliged to bear the burdens of craft, selfishness, and avarice ;—when they shall not be driven to be the instruments of the violence of others from a sense of their own weakness,

and from a want of authority to assess equal and proportioned charges upon all, they are not compelled to lay a strong hand upon the possessions of a part ;—when, under the exigencies of the state, (aggravated, if not caused, by the imbecility of their own government, and of all government,) they are not obliged to resort to *confiscation* to supply the defect of *taxation*, and thereby to hold out a pernicious example, to teach the different descriptions of the community to prey upon one another ;—when they abstain religiously from all general and extra-judicial declarations concerning the property of the subject ;—when they look with horror upon all arbitrary decisions in their legislative capacity, striking at prescriptive right, long undisturbed possession, opposing an uninterrupted stream of regular judicial determinations. by which sort of decisions they are conscious no man's possession could be safe, and individual property, to the very idea, would be extinguished ;—when I see your great sovereign bodies, your now supreme power, in this condition of deliberative freedom, and guided by these or similar principles in acting and forbearing, I shall be happy to behold in assemblies whose name is venerable to my understanding and dear to my heart, an authority, a dignity, a moderation, which, in all countries and governments. ought ever to accompany the collected reason and representative majesty of the commonwealth.

I shall rejoice no less in seeing a judicial power established in France, correspondent to such a legislature as I have presumed to hint at, and worthy to second it in its endeavours to secure the freedom and property of the subject. When your courts of justice shall obtain an ascertained condition, before they are made to decide on the condition of other men ;—when they shall not be called upon to take cognizance of public offences, whilst they themselves are considered only to exist as a tolerated abuse ;—when, under doubts of the legality of their rules of decision, their forms and modes of proceeding, and even of the validity of that system of authority to which they owe their existence ;—

when, amidst circumstances of suspense, fear, and humiliation, they shall not be put to judge on the lives, liberties, properties, or estimation of their fellow-citizens ;—when they are not called upon to put any man to his trial upon undefined crimes of state, not ascertained by any previous rule, statute, or course of precedent ;—when victims shall not be snatched from the fury of the people, to be brought before a tribunal, itself subject to the effects of the same fury, and where the acquittal of the parties accused, might only place the judge in the situation of the criminal ;—when I see tribunals placed in this state of independence of everything but law. and with a clear law for their direction,—as a true lover of equal justice, (under the shadow of which alone true liberty can live,) I shall rejoice in seeing such a happy order established in France, as much as I do in my consciousness that an order of the same kind, or one not very remote from it, has long been settled, and I hope on a firm foundation, in England. I am not so narrow-minded as to be unable to conceive that the same object may be attained in many ways, and perhaps in ways very different from those which we have followed in this country. If this real *practical* liberty, with a government powerful to protect, impotent to evade it, be established, or is in a fair train of being established in the democracy, or rather collection of democracies, which seem to be chosen for the future frame of society in France, it is not my having long enjoyed a sober share of freedom, under a qualified monarchy, that shall render me incapable of admiring and praising your system of republics. I should rejoice, even though England should hereafter be reckoned only as one among the happy nations, and should no longer retain her proud distinction, her monopoly of fame for a practical constitution, in which the grand secret had been found, of reconciling a government of real energy for all foreign and all domestic purposes, with the most perfect security to the liberty and safety of individuals. The government,

whatever its name or form may be, that shall be found substantially and practically to unite these advantages, will most merit the applause of all discerning men.

But if (for in my present want of information I must only speak hypothetically,) neither your great assemblies, nor your judicatures, nor your municipalities, act, and forbear to act, in the particulars, upon the principles, and in the spirit that I have stated, I must delay my congratulations on your acquisition of liberty. You may have made a revolution, but not a reformation. You may have subverted monarchy, but not recovered freedom.

You see, sir, that I have merely confined myself in my few observations on what has been done and is doing in France, to the topics of the liberty, property, and safety of the subjects. I have not said much on the influence of the present measures upon your country, as a state. It is not my business, as a citizen of the world; and it is unnecessary to take up much time about it, as it is sufficiently visible.

You are now to live in a new order of things, under a plan of government of which no man can speak from experience. Your talents, your public spirit, and your fortune, give you fair pretensions to a considerable share in it. Your settlement may be at hand; but that it is still at some distance, is more likely. The French may be yet to go through more transmigrations. They may pass, as one of our poets says, 'through many varieties of untried being', before their state obtains its final form. In that progress through chaos and darkness, you will find it necessary (at all times it is more or less so) to fix rules to keep your life and conduct in some steady course. You have theories enough concerning the rights of men;—it may not be amiss to add a small degree of attention to their nature and disposition. It is with man in the concrete;—it is with common human life, and human actions, you are to be concerned. I have taken so many liberties with you, that I am almost got the length of venturing

to suggest something which may appear in the assuming tone of advice. You will, however, be so good as to receive my very few hints with your usual indulgence, though some of them, I confess, are not in the taste of this enlightened age; and, indeed, are no better than the late ripe fruit of mere experience. Never wholly separate in your mind the merits of any political question, from the men who are concerned in it. You will be told, that if a measure is good, what have you to do with the character and views of those who bring it forward. But designing men never separate their plans from their interests; and, if you assist them in their schemes, you will find the pretended good, in the end, thrown aside or perverted, and the interested object alone compassed, and that, perhaps, through your means. The power of bad men is no indifferent thing.

At this moment you may not perceive the full sense of this rule; but you will recollect it when the cases are before you;—you will then see and find its use. It will often keep your virtue from becoming a tool of the ambition and ill designs of others. Let me add what I think has some connexion with the rule I mentioned,—that you ought not to be so fond of any political object, as not to think the means of compassing it a serious consideration. No man is less disposed than I am to put you under the tuition of a petty pedantic scruple, in the management of arduous affairs. All I recommend is, that whenever the sacrifice of any subordinate point of morality, or of honour, or even of common liberal sentiment and feeling is called for, one ought to be tolerably sure that the object is worth it. Nothing is good, but in proportion and with reference. There are several who give an air of consequence to very petty designs and actions, by the crimes through which they make their way to their objects. Whatever is obtained smoothly and by easy means, appears of no value in their eyes. But when violent measures are in agitation, one ought to be pretty clear that

there are no others to which we can resort, and that a predilection from character to such methods is not the true cause of their being proposed. The state was reformed by Sylla and by Caesar; but the Cornelian law and the Julian law were not worth the proscription. The pride of the Roman nobility deserved a check; but I cannot, for that reason, admire the conduct of Cinna, and Marius, and Saturninus.

I admit that evils may be so very great and urgent, that other evils are to be submitted to for the mere hope of their removal. A war, for instance, may be necessary, and we know what are the rights of war; but before we use those rights, we ought to be clearly in the state which alone can justify them; and not, in the very fold of peace and security, by a bloody sophistry, to act towards any persons at once as citizens and as enemies, and, without the necessary formalities and evident distinctive lines of war, to exercise upon our countrymen the most dreadful of all hostilities. Strong party contentions, and a very violent opposition to our desires and opinions, are not war, nor can justify any one of its operations.

One form of government may be better than another, and this difference may be worth a struggle. I think so. I do not mean to treat any of those forms which are often the contrivances of deep human wisdom (not the rights of men, as some people, in my opinion, not very wisely, talk of them) with slight or disrespect; nor do I mean to level them.

A positively vicious and abusive government ought to be changed,—and, if necessary, by violence,—if it cannot be (as sometimes it is the case) reformed. But when the question is concerning the more or the less *perfection* in the organization of a government, the allowance to *means* is not of so much latitude. There is, by the essential fundamental constitution of things, a radical infirmity in all human contrivances; and the weakness is often so attached to the very perfection of our political mechanism, that some defect in it,—something that stops short of its prin-

ciple,—something that controls, that mitigates, that moderates it,—becomes a necessary corrective to the evils that the theoretic perfection would produce. I am pretty sure it often is so ; and this truth may be exemplified abundantly.

It is true that every defect is not of course such a corrective as I state ; but supposing it is not, an imperfect good is still a good. The defect may be tolerable, and may be removed at some future time. In that case, prudence (in all things a virtue, in politics, the first of virtues,) will lead us rather to acquiesce in some qualified plan, that does not come up to the full perfection of the abstract idea, than to push for the more perfect, which cannot be attained without tearing to pieces the whole contexture of the commonwealth, and creating a heart-ache in a thousand worthy bosoms. In that case, combining the means and end, the less perfect is the more desirable. The *means* to any end being first in order, are *immediate* in their good or their evil ;—they are always, in a manner, *certainities*. The *end* is doubly problematical ; first, whether it is to be attained ; then, whether, supposing it attained, we obtain the true object we sought for.

But allow it in any degree probable, that theoretic and practical perfection may differ,—that an object pure and absolute may not be so good as one lowered, mixed, and qualified ; then, what we abate in our demand, in favour of moderation and justice, and tenderness to individuals, would be neither more nor less than a real improvement which a wise legislator would make, if he had no collateral motive whatsoever, and only looked, in the formation of his scheme, to its own independent ends and purposes. Would it then be right to make way, through temerity and crime, to a form of things which, when obtained, evident reason, perhaps imperious necessity, would compel us to alter, with the disgrace of inconsistency in our conduct, and of want of foresight in our designs ?

Believe me, sir, in all changes in the state, modera-

tion is a virtue, not only amiable but powerful. It is a disposing, arranging, conciliating, cementing virtue. In the formation of new constitutions, it is in its province. Great powers reside in those who can make great changes. Their own moderation is their only check; and if this virtue is not paramount in their minds, their acts will taste more of their power than of their wisdom, or their benevolence. Whatever they do will be in extremes; it will be crude, harsh, precipitate. It will be submitted to with grudging and reluctance. Revenge will be smothered and hoarded, and the duration of schemes marked in that temper, will be as precarious as their establishment was odious. This virtue of moderation (which times and situations will clearly distinguish from the counterfeits of pusillanimity and indecision) is the virtue only of superior minds. It requires a deep courage, and full of reflection, to be temperate when the voice of multitudes (the specious mimic of fame and reputation) passes judgement against you. The impetuous desire of an unthinking public will endure no course, but what conducts to splendid and perilous extremes. Then, to dare to be fearful, when all about you are full of presumption and confidence, and when those who are bold at the hazard of others would punish your caution and disaffection, is to show a mind prepared for its trial; it discovers, in the midst of general levity, a self-possessing and collected character, which, sooner or later, bids fair to attract every thing to it, as to a centre. If, however, the tempest should prove to be so very violent, that it would make public prudence itself unseasonable, and, therefore, little less than madness for the individual and the public too; perhaps a young man could not do better than to retreat for a while into study,—to leave the field to those whose duty or inclination, or the necessities of their condition, have put them in possession of it, and wait for the settlement of such a commonwealth as an honest man may act in with satisfaction and credit. This he can never do when

those who counsel the public, or the prince, are under terror, let the authority under which they are made to speak other than the dictates of their conscience, be never so imposing in its name and attributes.

This moderation is no enemy to zeal and enthusiasm. There is room enough for them; for the restraint is no more than the restraint of principle, and the restraint of reason.

I have been led further than I intended; but every day's account shows more and more, in my opinion, the ill-consequence of keeping good principles, and good general views, within no bounds. Pardon the liberty I have taken; though it seems somewhat singular that I, whose opinions have so little weight in my own country, where I have some share in a public trust, should write as if it were possible they should affect one man with regard to affairs in which I have no concern. But, for the present, my time is my own, and to tire your patience is the only injury I can do you.

I am. &c.

EDM. BURKE.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO PHILIP FRANCIS, ESQ.

*Gerard Street, February 20, 1790.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I sat up rather late at Carlton House, and on my return hither, I found your letter on my table. I have not slept since. You will, therefore, excuse me if you find anything confused, or otherwise expressed than I could wish, in speaking upon a matter which interests you from your regard to me. There are some things in your letter for which I must thank you; there are others which I must answer;—some things bear the mark of friendly admonition; others bear some resemblance to the tone of accusation.

You are the only friend I have who will dare to give me advice; I must, therefore, have something

terrible in me, which intimidates all others who know me from giving me the only unequivocal mark of their regard. Whatever this rough and menacing manner may be, I must search myself upon it; and when I discover it, old as I am, I must endeavour to correct it. I flattered myself, however, that you at least would not have thought my other friends justified in withholding from me their services of this kind. You certainly do not always convey to me your opinions with the greatest tenderness and management; and yet I do not recollect, since I first had the pleasure of your acquaintance, that there has been a heat or a coolness of a single day's duration, on my side, during that whole time. I believe your memory cannot present to you an instance of it. I ill deserve friends, if I throw them away on account of the candour and simplicity of their good nature. In particular you know, that you have in some instances favoured me with your instructions relative to things I was preparing for the public. If I did not in every instance agree with you, I think you had, on the whole, sufficient proofs of my docility, to make you believe that I received your corrections, not only without offence, but with no small degree of gratitude.

Your remarks upon the first two sheets of my Paris letter, relate to the composition and the matter. The composition, you say, is loose, and I am quite sure of it:—I never intended it should be otherwise. For, purporting to be, what in truth it originally was,—a letter to a friend, I had no idea of digesting it in a systematic order. The style is open to correction, and wants it. My natural style of writing is somewhat careless, and I should be happy in receiving your advice towards making it as little vicious as such a style is capable of being made. The general character and colour of a style, which grows out of the writer's peculiar turn of mind and habit of expressing his thoughts, must be attended to in all corrections. It is not the insertion of a piece of stuff, though of a better kind, which is at all times an improvement.

Your main objections are, however, of a much deeper nature, and go to the political opinions and moral sentiments of the piece ; in which I find, though with no sort of surprise, having often talked with you on the subject,—that we differ only in everything. You say, ‘ the mischief you are going to do yourself, is to my apprehension palpable ; I snuff it in the wind, and my taste sickens at it.’ This anticipated stench, that turns your stomach at such a distance, must be nauseous indeed. You seem to think I shall incur great (and not wholly undeserved) infamy, by this publication. This makes it a matter of some delicacy to me, to suppress what I have written ; for I must admit in my own feelings, and in that of those who have seen the piece, that my sentiments and opinions deserve the infamy with which they are threatened. If they do not, I know nothing more than that I oppose the prejudices and inclinations of many people. This I was well aware of from the beginning ; and it was in order to oppose those inclinations and prejudices, that I proposed to publish my letter. I really am perfectly astonished how you could dream, with my paper in your hand, that I found no other cause than the beauty of the queen of France (now, I suppose, pretty much faded) for disapproving the conduct which has been held towards her, and for expressing my own particular feelings. I am not to order the natural sympathies of my own heart, and of every honest breast, to wait until all the jokes of all the anecdotes of the coffee-houses of Paris, and of the dissenting meeting-houses of London, are scoured of all the slander of those who calumniate persons, that, afterwards, they may murder them with impunity. I know nothing of your story of Messalina. Am I obliged to prove juridically the virtues of all those I shall see suffering every kind of wrong, and contumely, and risk of life, before I endeavour to interest others in their sufferings,—and before I endeavour to excite horror against midnight assassins at back-stairs, and their more wicked abettors in pulpits ? What !—Are

not high rank, great splendour of descent, great personal elegance and outward accomplishments, ingredients of moment in forming the interest we take in the misfortunes of men? The minds of those who do not feel thus, are not even systematically right. 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?'—Why,—because she was Hecuba, the Queen of Troy,—the wife of Priam,—and suffered, in the close of life, a thousand calamities! I felt too for Hecuba, when I read the fine tragedy of Euripides upon her story; and I never inquired into the anecdotes of the court or city of Troy, before I gave way to the sentiments which the author wished to inspire;—nor do I remember that he ever said one word of her virtue. It is for those who applaud or palliate assassination, regicide, and base insult to women of illustrious place, to prove the crimes (in<sup>1</sup> sufferings) which they allege, to justify their own. But if they have proved fornication on any such woman,—taking the manners of the world, and the manners of France,—I shall never put it in a parallel with assassination!—No: I have no such inverted scale of faults, in my heart or my head.

You find it perfectly ridiculous, and unfit for me in particular, to take these things as my ingredients of commiseration. Pray why is it absurd in me to think, that the chivalrous spirit which dictated a veneration for women of condition and of beauty, without any consideration whatever of enjoying them, was the great source of those manners which have been the pride and ornament of Europe for so many ages? And am I not to lament that I have lived to see those manners extinguished in so shocking a manner, by means of speculations of finance, and the false science of a sordid and degenerate philosophy? I tell you again,—that the recollection of the manner in which I saw the Queen of France, in the year 1774, and the contrast between that brilliancy, splendour,

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript of this letter is not the original, and probably there has been some error in copying these words.

and beauty, with the prostrate homage of a nation to her,—and the abominable scene of 1789, which I was describing,—*did* draw tears from me and wetted my paper. These tears came again into my eyes, almost as often as I looked at the description ;—they may again. You do not believe this fact, nor that these are my real feelings ; but that the whole is affected, or, as you express it, downright foppery. My friend,—I tell you it is truth ; and that it is true, and will be truth, when you and I are no more ; and will exist as long as men with their natural feelings shall exist. I shall say no more on this foppery of mine. Oh ! by the way, you ask me how long I have been an admirer of German ladies ? Always the same. Present me the idea of such massacres about any German lady here, and such attempts to assassinate her, and such a triumphant procession from Windsor to the Old Jewry, and I assure you, I shall be quite as full of natural concern and just indignation.

As to the other points, they deserve serious consideration, and they shall have it. I certainly cannot profit quite so much by your assistance, as if we agreed. In that case, every correction would be forwarding the design. We should work with one common view. But it is impossible that any man can correct a work according to its true spirit, who is opposed to its object, or can help the expression of what he thinks should not be expressed at all.

I should agree with you about the vileness of the controversy with such miscreants as the ‘ Revolution Society,’ and the ‘ National Assembly ;’ and I know very well that they, as well as their allies, the Indian delinquents, will darken the air with their arrows. But I do not yet think they have the advowson of reputation. I shall try that point. My dear sir, you think of nothing but controversies ; ‘ I challenge into the field of battle, and retire defeated, &c.’ If their having the last word be a defeat, they most assuredly will defeat me. But I intend no controversy with Dr. Price, or Lord Shelburne, or any other of their

set. I mean to set in full view the danger from their wicked principles and their black hearts. I intend to state the true principles of our constitution in church and state, upon grounds opposite to theirs. If any one be the better for the example made of them, and for this exposition, well and good. I mean to do my best to expose them to the hatred, ridicule, and contempt of the whole world; as I always shall expose such calumniators, hypocrites, sowers of sedition, and approvers of murder and all its triumphs. When I have done that, they may have the field to themselves; and I care very little how they triumph over me, since I hope they will not be able to draw me at their heels, and carry my head in triumph on their poles.

I have been interrupted, and have said enough. Adieu! believe me always sensible of your friendship; though it is impossible that a greater difference can exist on earth, than, unfortunately for me, there is on those subjects, between your sentiments and mine.

EDM. BURKE.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO CAPTAIN MERCER

*London, February 26, 1790.*

DEAR SIR,

The speedy answer I return to your letter, I hope will convince you of the high value I set upon the regard you are so good to express for me, and the obliging trouble which you take to inform my judgment upon matters in which we are all very deeply concerned. I think perfectly well of your heart and your principles, and of the strength of your natural understanding, which, according to your opportunities, you have not been wanting in pains to improve. If you are mistaken, it is perhaps owing to the impression almost inevitably made, by the various careless conversations which we are engaged in through life; conversations in which those who propagate their doctrines have not been called upon for much reflec-

tion concerning their end and tendency ; and when those who imperceptibly imbibe them are not required, by a particular duty, very closely to examine them, or to act from the impressions they received. I am obliged to *act*, and am, therefore, bound to call my principles and sentiments to a strict account. As far as my share of a public trust goes, I am in trust religiously to maintain the rights and properties of all descriptions of people in the possessions which they legally hold, and in the rule by which alone they can be secure in any possession. I do not find myself at liberty, either as a man or as a trustee for men, to take a vested property from one man and give it to another, because I think that the portion of one is too great, and that of another too small. From my first juvenile rudiments of speculative study, to the grey hairs of my present experience. I have never learned anything else. I can never be taught anything else by *reason* ; and when *force* comes, I shall consider whether I am to submit to it, or how I am to resist it. This I am very sure of, that an early guard against the manifest tendency of a contrary doctrine, is the only way by which those who love order can be prepared to resist such force.

The calling men by the names of ‘ pampered and luxurious prelates ’ is, in you, no more than a mark of your dislike to intemperance and idle expense. But in others it is used for other purposes ; it is often used to extinguish the sense of justice in our minds, and the natural feelings of humanity in our bosoms. In them, such abusive language is used to mitigate the cruel effects of reducing men of opulent condition, and their innumerable dependents, to the last distress. If I were to adopt the plan of a spoliatory reformation, I should probably employ it ; but it would aggravate, instead of extenuating guilt, in overturning the sacred principles of property.

Sir, I say that church and state, and human society too, (for which church and state are made,) are subverted by such doctrines, joined to such practices, as

leave no foundation for property in long possessions. My dear Captain Mercer, it is not my calling the use you make of your plate, in your house either of dwelling or of prayer, 'pageantry and hypocrisy,' that can justify me in taking from you your property, and your liberty to use your own property according to your own ideas of ornament. When you find me attempting to break into your house to take your plate under any pretence whatsoever,—but most of all, under pretence of purity of religion and Christian charity,—shoot me for a robber and an hypocrite, as in that case I shall certainly be. The true Christian religion never taught me any such practices; nor did the religion of my nature, nor any religion, nor any law.

Let those who have never abstained from a full meal, and as much wine as they could swallow, for a single day of their whole lives, satirize 'luxurious and pampered prelates' if they will. Let them abuse such prelates, and such lords, and such 'squires', provided it be only to correct their vices. I care not much about the language of this moral satire, if they go no further than satire. But there are occasions when the language of Falstaff, reproaching the Londoners whom he robbed in their way to Canterbury, with their gorbellies and city-luxury, is not so becoming. It is not calling the landed estates, possessed by old *prescriptive* rights, 'the accumulations of ignorance and superstition,' that can support me in shaking that grand title which supersedes every other title, and which all my studies of general jurisprudence have taught me to consider as one principal cause of the formation of states;—I mean the ascertaining and securing of *prescription*. 'But these are donations made in ages of ignorance and superstition.' Be it so;—it proves that they were made long ago; and this is prescription, and this gives right and title. It is possible that many estates about you were obtained by arms; a thing almost as bad as superstition, and not much short of ignorance;—but it is old violence; and that which might be wrong in the beginning, is

consecrated by time and becomes lawful. This may be superstition in me, and ignorance ; but I had rather remain in ignorance and superstition, than be enlightened and purified out of the first principles of law and natural justice.

I never will suffer you, if I can help it, to be deprived of the well-earned fruits of your industry, because others may want your fortune more than you do, and may have laboured, and do now labour, in vain to acquire even a subsistence. Neither, on the contrary, if success had less smiled upon your endeavours, and you had come home insolvent, would I take from any ' pampered and luxurious lord ' in your neighbourhood, one acre of his land, or one spoon from his sideboard, to compensate your losses ; though incurred, as they would have been incurred, in the course of a well-spent, virtuous, and industrious life. God is the distributor of his own blessings. I will not impiously attempt to usurp his throne, but will keep, according to the subordinate place and trust in which he has stationed me, the order of property which I find established in my country. No guiltless man has ever been, nor, I trust, ever will be, able to say with truth, that he has been obliged to retrench a dish at his table, for any reformatations of mine.

You pay me the compliment to suppose me a foe to tyranny and oppression ; and you are, therefore, surprised at the sentiments I have lately delivered in parliament. I *am* that determined foe to tyranny, or I greatly deceive myself in my character, and am an idiot in my conduct. It is because I am such a foe, and mean to continue so, that I abominate the example of France for this country. I know that tyranny seldom attacks the poor,—never in the first instance. They are not its proper prey. It falls upon the wealthy and the great, whom, by rendering them objects of envy, and otherwise obnoxious to the multitude, they the more easily destroy ; and when they are destroyed, that multitude which was led to that ill work by the arts of bad men, is itself undone

for ever. I hate tyranny, at least I think so; but I hate it most of all where most are concerned in it. The tyranny of a multitude is but a multiplied tyranny. If, as society is constituted in these large countries of France and England,—full of unequal property, I must make my choice (which God avert) between the despotism of a single person, or of the many, my election is made:—For, in the forty years of my observation, as much injustice and tyranny has been practised in a few months by a French democracy, as by all the arbitrary monarchs in Europe. I speak of public, glaring acts of tyranny. I say nothing of the common effects of old abusive governments, because I do not know that as bad may not be found from the new. This democracy begins very ill; and I feel no security that what has been rapacious and bloody in its commencement, in its final settlement will be mild and protecting. They cannot, indeed, in future rob so much, because they have left little that can be taken. I go to the full length of my principle. I should think the government of the deposed King of France, or of the late King of Prussia, or the present Emperor, or the present Czarina, none of them, perhaps, perfectly good,—to be far better than the government of twenty-four millions of men *all as good as you*, (and I do not know anybody better)—supposing that those twenty-four millions would be subject, as infallibly they would, to the same unrestrained, though virtuous impulses; because, it is plain, you would think everything justified by your warm good intentions; you would heat one another by your common zeal; counsel and advice would be lost on you; you would not listen to temperate individuals; and you would be infinitely less capable of moderation than the most heady of those princes.

What have I to do with France, but as the common interest of humanity, and its example to this country engages me? I know France, by observation and inquiry, pretty tolerably for a stranger; and I am

not a man to fall in love with the faults or follies of the old or new government. You reason as if I were running a parallel between its former abusive government and the present tyranny. What had all this to do with the opinions I delivered in parliament, which run a parallel between the liberty they might have had, and this frantic delusion? This is the way by which you blind and deceive yourself, and beat the air in your argument with me. Why do you instruct me on a state of case which has no existence? You know how to reason very well. What most of the newspapers make me say, I know not, nor do I much care. I don't, however, think they have thus stated me. There is a very fair abstract of my speech printed in a little pamphlet, which I would send you if it were worth putting you to the expense.

To discuss the affairs of France and its revolution, would require a volume,—perhaps many volumes. Your general reflections about revolutions may be right or wrong; they conclude nothing. I don't find myself disposed to controvert them, for I do not think they apply to the present affairs; nay, I am sure they do not. I conceive you have got very imperfect accounts of these transactions. I believe I am much more exactly informed concerning them.

I am sorry, indeed, to find that our opinions do differ essentially,—fundamentally, and are at the utmost possible distance from each other, if I understand you or myself clearly on this subject. Your freedom is far from displeasing to me,—I love it; for I always wish to know the full of what is in the mind of the friend I converse with. I give you mine as freely, and I hope I shall offend you as little as you do me.

I shall have no objection to your showing my letter to as many as you please. I have no secrets with regard to the public. I have never shrunk from obloquy, and I have never courted popular applause. If I have ever met with any share of it—*non rapui sed recepi*. No difference of opinion, however, shall hinder me from cultivating your friendship, whilst

you permit me to do so. I have not wrote this to discuss these matters in a prolonged controversy. I wish we may never say more of them; but to comply with your commands, which ever shall have due weight with me.

I am,  
Most respectfully and affectionately yours,  
EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO WILLIAM  
WINDHAM, ESQ.

*Duke Street, St. James's, December 21, 1790.*

MY DEAR SIR,

The valuable present which I received from the resident graduates in the University of Oxford, becomes doubly acceptable by passing through your hands.<sup>1</sup> Gentlemen so eminent in science, erudition, and virtue, and who possess the uncommon art of doing kind things in the kindest manner, would naturally choose a person qualified like themselves, to convey their favours and distinctions to those whom they are inclined to honour.

Be pleased to assure those learned gentlemen, that I am beyond measure happy, in finding my well-meant endeavours well received by them; and I think my satisfaction does not arise from motives merely selfish; because their declared approbation must be of the greatest importance in giving an effect (which, without that sanction, might well be wanting) to an humble attempt in favour of the cause of freedom, virtue, and order united. This cause it is our common wish and our common interest to maintain; and it can hardly be maintained without securing, on a solid foundation, and preserving in an uncorrupted purity the noble establishments which the wisdom of our ancestors have formed for giving permanence to those blessings which they have left us as our best inheritance.

<sup>1</sup> An address of congratulation upon the attitude he had taken to the French Revolution.

Express to these worthy gentlemen the consolation and support which I feel from their approbation, at a moment when I am, in declining age, strength, and faculties, in my last effort of the long, long struggle which, with you, and so many other excellent persons, I have made to shake off the most dangerous and most malignant distemper by which the constitution of Great Britain was ever attacked, and under which it must sink, if a most marked distinction is not made between the persons who serve us well or ill in the administration of our power abroad; or if eastern despotism, peculation, venality, oppression, inhumanity, and cruelty, can find countenance in this country, to the disgrace of a nation which glories in legal liberty, and to the shame of that religion, which, being founded upon a suffering under tyranny and injustice, both from the great and from the people, in a peculiar manner engages all its professors, and all its teachers, to discountenance such tempers and practices, and even to wage, under the standard of the Captain of our Salvation, a war without quarter upon all cruelty and oppression, wherever they appear, in whatever shape, and in whatever descriptions of men.

I have the honour to be, with the most perfect respect and affection,

My dear sir,  
Your most faithful and obliged  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE HON.  
JOHN TREVOR, ESQ.<sup>1</sup>

*January, 1791.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am exceedingly flattered in finding that any thing which I have done could contribute to yours and Mrs. Trevor's entertainment during part of the time that the service of your country abroad

<sup>1</sup> The British Minister at Turin.

deprives it of so much of its ornament and satisfaction at home. The pamphlet which has been so happy as to engage something of yours and Mrs. Trevor's attention, has not been ill-received here. This gives me no small satisfaction, because it shows that the major part of our countrymen do not find their sentiments misrepresented, when I state them as no admirers of the late prosperous, though most unnatural and perfidious, rebellion in France; or of the degrading tyranny which has been since established in that unfortunate country, under the name of *constitution*.

I thank you for your goodness in sending me Mr. Lally Tolendal's book. It is a very eloquent performance, and might possibly be of great use, if one could guess what would be serviceable in the present state of things. The people of that country are ill of so anomalous, and, in every respect, so new a distemper, that no one can possibly prognosticate anything concerning its crisis, or its indications of cure. Whether the drastic purges, or the mild aperitives are the most promising, I cannot possibly say. To tell you the truth, I have no opinion at all of internal remedies in their case. To quit the metaphor,—I cannot persuade myself that anything whatsoever can be effected without a great force from abroad. The predominant faction is the strongest, as I conceive, without comparison. They are armed. Their enemies are disarmed and dispersed. The army seems hardly fit for any good purpose. But the grand point against all interior attempts is, that the faction are in possession. Unless it be taken by surprise, as the late French monarchy was, it is not easy, by conspiracy, or insurrection, to overturn any government. A republican government, or rather a body of republican governments, cannot be taken by a *coup de main*, or put an end to by the seizure of one person. They have the king in custody, and can make him say and do just what they please. The people, too, have the name of the king on their side. All the

royal authority which exists, operates against the partizans of the monarchy.

One might as well have expected a counter-revolution in Holland, in Liege, or in the Netherlands, by a change of mind in the people, without a great foreign force, as in France. Full as much in my opinion. Nothing else but a foreign force can or will do. In this design, too, Great Britain and Prussia must at least acquiesce. Nor is it a small military force that can do the business. It is a serious design, and must be done with combined strength. Nor must that strength be under any ordinary conduct. It will require as much political management as military skill in the commanders.

France is weak indeed, divided, and deranged; but God knows, when the things came to be tried, whether the invaders would not find that this enterprise was not to support a party, but to conquer a kingdom. I perhaps have the misfortune to differ with you in one point; and when I do, you may be sure I cannot be very positive in my opinion. My difference is about the time of making the attempt. Every hour any system of government continues, be that system what it will, the more it obtains consistency, and the better it will be able to provide for its own support; and the less the people, who always look to settlement of one kind or other, will be disposed to any enterprises for overturning it. If the powers who may be disposed to think, as I most seriously do, that no monarchy, limited or unlimited, nor any of the old republics, can possibly be safe as long as this strange, nameless, wild enthusiastic thing is established in the centre of Europe, may not be in readiness to act in concert and with all their forces, —if this be the case, to be sure nothing is to be attempted but the preluding war of paper. For my part, I am entirely in the dark about the designs and means of the powers of Europe in this respect. However, this I am quite sure of, all the other policy is childish play in comparison.

I have a very high opinion of Mons. de Calonne. His book, upon the whole, must do great service. I wish, indeed, that he had hinted less about arrangements to be made in consequence of success. He speaks as if commissaries had been appointed to settle these differences. But I conceive things are very far from such a state. The matters he proposes will never be understood by the seduced common people ; and, as to the leaders, he must think much better of their moderation than I do, if he thinks that anything but their present dominion will serve them. Theoretic plans of constitution have been the bane of France ; and I am satisfied that nothing can possibly do it any real service, but to establish it upon all its *ancient bases*. Till that is done, one man's speculation will appear as good as another's. Those who think the king and two houses can be the government of France, mistake, I am afraid, the true internal constitution of our government, which is not what it appears on paper. But I have tired you enough already, and will not enter into an explanation on this head.

EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE  
CHEVALIER DE LA BINTINNAYE<sup>1</sup>

*Duke Street, March, 1791.*

DEAR SIR,

I had the honour to receive your most friendly and obliging letter from Brussels. You greatly overrate the value of the very few attentions which I had the means of showing you, whilst you remained in London. I do most sincerely lament the sad occasion that produced our acquaintance. In so great a public

<sup>1</sup> The Chevalier de la Bintinnaye was a relation of Cicé, Bishop of Auxerre, with whom the Burkes, father and son, formed an intimate acquaintance when in France in 1773

disaster, however, I feel this consolation, that I had an opportunity of seeing undeserved affliction borne with a manly constancy, and that the same courage which produced your honourable wounds, and sustained you under them, has enabled you to support your reverse of fortune with dignity, which becomes those who suffer in the cause of honour and virtue. I should be happy to send you a copy of the letter which I wrote to a person of distinction in Paris, in answer to one from him.<sup>1</sup> But as I had my doubts whether what I wrote in the present temper of the times, and the present posture of affairs, might be useful in the publication, I left the matter to the gentleman's own discretion, promising not to disperse any copies without his leave. This, I hope, my dear sir, will plead my excuse to you. I did hear that a translation of that letter was preparing at Paris. If this be the case, you will see it very soon. It will, I am afraid, afford you no very great satisfaction. Some part of the letter was to exculpate myself (or rather perhaps to apologize) from some faults which the gentleman found in my pamphlet. The rest was to show, from the actual state of France, (as well as I was able to enter into its condition,) the utter impossibility of a counter-revolution from any internal cause. You know, sir, that no party can act without a resolute, vigorous, zealous, and enterprising chief. The chief of every monarchical party must be the monarch himself;—at least, he must lend himself readily to the spirit and energy of others. You have a well-intentioned and virtuous prince; but minds like his, bred with no other view than to a safe and languid domination, are not made for breaking their prisons, terrifying their enemies, and animating their friends. Besides, in a wife and children, he has given hostages to his enemies. If the king can do nothing

<sup>1</sup> This is probably the letter to a member of the National Assembly, published in the fourth volume of Burke's works, "World's Classics" edition.

in his situation, the wonder is not great. It is much greater, on all appearance, that not one man is to be found in the numerous nobility of France, who, to great military talents, adds any sort of lead, consideration, or following, in the country or in the army. To strengthen itself, the monarchy had weakened every other force. To unite the nation to itself, it had dissolved all other ties. When the chain which held the people to the prince was once broken, the whole frame of the commonwealth was found in a state of disconnexion. There was neither force nor union anywhere, to sustain the monarchy, or the nobility, or the church. As to great and commanding talents, they are the gift of Providence in some way unknown to us. They rise where they are least expected. They fail when everything seems disposed to produce them, or at least to call them forth. Your sole hope seems to me to rest in the disposition of the neighbouring powers, and in their ability to yield you assistance. I can conjecture nothing with certainty of this, in either of the points. But at present I see nothing that in the smallest degree looks that way. In the meantime the usurpation gathers strength by continuance, and credit by success. People will look to power, and join, or, at least, accommodate themselves to it. I confess I am astonished at the blindness of the states of Europe, who are contending with each other about points of trivial importance, and on old worn-out principles and topics of policy, when the very existence of all of them is menaced by a new evil, which none of the ancient maxims are of the least importance in dissipating. But in all these things, we must acknowledge and revere, in silence, a superior hand. In the spirit of this submission I, however, am so far from blaming every sort of endeavour, that I much lament the remissness of the gentlemen of France. Their adversaries have seized upon all the newspapers which circulate within this kingdom, and which from hence are dispersed all over Europe. That they are masters of the presses of

Paris, is a thing of course. But surely, the oppressed party might amongst them maintain a person here, to whom they might transmit a true state of affairs. The emissaries of the usurpation here, are exceedingly active in propagating stories which tend to alienate the minds of people of this country from the suffering cause. Not one French refugee has intelligence or spirit enough to contradict them. I have done all which the common duties of humanity can claim from one who has not the honour of being a subject of France. I have duties and occupations at home, public and private, which will not suffer me to continue longer with my thoughts abroad. But if any gentleman from France would undertake such a task, with proper materials for it, he should have my best advice. The expense of such a person stationed here would not be great; and surely, reduced as the *noblesse* of France not expatriated are, enough remains to them to do this and more. If their avarice, or their dissipation, will afford nothing to their honour or their safety, their case is additionally deplorable.

My wife and my son always preserve the most respectful and affectionate remembrance of you, of the bishop, and of Mademoiselle de Cicé. I have had a letter from the Vicomte, with a very satisfactory memorial. I have given him an answer, and have taken the liberty of putting further questions to him.

I have the honour to be, with the most cordial and respectful attachment,

Dear sir,

Your most faithful and obedient  
humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

I have written at large to the Vicomte de Cicé, and directed my letter to Jersey. I hear that he is now at Brussels; I hope he has got my letter. Pray present my most humble respects to him.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE CHEVALIER  
DE RIVAROL <sup>1</sup>

June 1, 1791.

SIR,

I am much obliged to you for your very polite and flattering attention to me, and the piece which you are pleased to regard with so much indulgence. It is an endeavour very well intended, but I am conscious, very inadequate to the great interest of this kingdom, and of mankind, which it proposes to assert.

I have seen, though too late to profit by them, your brother's admirable annals, which may rank with those of Tacitus. If there is, indeed, a strong coincidence in our way of thinking, I ought to be very proud of that circumstance. If I had seen his performance before I had written on the same subject, I should rather have chosen to enrich my pamphlet with quotations from thence, than have ventured to express the thoughts in which we agreed, in worse words of my own. I thank you, too, for the elegant poem which you have done me the honour to transmit to me with your letter. So far as I am capable of forming any judgement upon French poetry, the verses are spirited and well-turned, and the author possesses the art of interesting the passions, which is the triumph of that kind of eloquence. I wish, without disguising my real sentiments, I could go as far in my approbation of the general tendency of one of these pieces, and of the policy of such publications at such a time as this. Forgive me, sir, if I take the liberty of suggesting to your superior judgement, as well as to that of the Emperor's advisers, that it is not very easy to suppress (by the methods lately used) what you call *the monkish fury*, without exciting fury of another kind;—a sort of fury which will perhaps be found more untractable than the other, and which may be carried to much greater lengths. In such a

<sup>1</sup> The distinguished counter-revolutionist.

dilemma, it would not misbecome a great statesman seriously to consider what he has in charge to support, and the country, which it is his duty to preserve in peace and prosperity. That fury which arises in the minds of men, on being stripped of their goods and turned out of their houses by acts of power, and our sympathy with them under such wrongs, are feelings implanted in us by our Creator, to be (under the direction of His laws) the means of our preservation. Such fury and such sympathy are things very different from men's imaginary political systems concerning governments. They arise out of instinctive principles of self-defence, and are executive powers under the legislation of nature, enforcing its first laws. These principles, prince and commonwealth (whatever they may think their rights) cannot always attack with perfect impunity. If princes will, in cold blood, and from mistaken ideas of policy, excite the passions of the multitude against particular descriptions of men, whether they be priests or nobility, in order to avail themselves of the assistance of that multitude in their enterprises against those classes, let them recollect that they call in the aid of an ally more dangerous to themselves than those whom they are desirous of oppressing.

The Netherlands have been but newly recovered to the Emperor. He owes that recovery to a concurrence of very extraordinary circumstances, and he has made great sacrifices to his object. Is it really his interest to have it understood that he means to repeat the very proceedings which have excited all the late troubles in his territories? Can it be true that he means to draw up the very same flood-gates which have let loose the deluge that has overwhelmed the great monarchy in his neighbourhood? Does he think, if he means to encourage the spirit which prevails in France, that it will be exerted in his favour, or to answer his purposes? Whilst he is destroying prejudices, which (under good management) may become the surest support of his government, is he

not afraid that the discussion may go further than he wishes? If he excites men to inquire too scrupulously into the foundation of all old opinion, may he not have reason to apprehend that several will see as little use in monarchs as in monks? The question is not whether they will argue logically or not, but whether the turn of mind, which leads to such discussions, may not become as fatal to the former as the latter. He may trust in the fine army he has assembled, but fine armies have been seduced from their allegiance, and the seducers are not far from him. He may fortify his frontier, but fortresses have been betrayed by their garrisons, and garrisons overpowered by burghers. Those of the democratical faction, in the Netherlands, have always an armed ally more conveniently situated to assist them, than the Emperor is conveniently situated to assist himself. Would not prudence rather direct him, I say, to fortify himself in the heart of his people, by repairing, rather than by destroying, those dykes and barriers which prejudice might raise in his favour, and which cost nothing to his treasury either in the construction or the reparation?

It were better to forget, once for all, the *encyclopédie* and the whole body of economists, and to revert to those old rules and principles which have hitherto made princes great, and nations happy. Let not a prince circumstanced like him, weakly fall in love either with monks or nobles, still less let him violently hate them. In his Netherlands, he possesses the most populous, the best cultivated, and the most flourishing country in Europe; a country from which, at this day, and even in England, we are to learn the perfect practice of the best of arts,—that of agriculture. If he has a people like the Flemings, industrious, frugal, easy, obedient, what is it to him whether they are fond of monks, or love ringing of bells, and lighting of candles, or not? A wise prince, as I hope the Emperor is, will study the genius of his people. He will indulge them in their humours, he will preserve

them in their privileges, he will act upon the circumstances of his states as he finds them, and whilst thus acting upon the practical principles of a practical policy, he is the happy prince of a happy people. He will not care what the Condorcet and the Raynal, and the whole flight of the magpies and jays of philosophy, may fancy and chatter concerning his conduct and character.

Well it is for the Emperor, that the late rebellion of the Netherlands was a rebellion against innovation. When, therefore, he returned to the possession of his estates, (an event which no man wished more sincerely than I did,) he found none of the ancient landmarks removed. He found everything, except the natural effects of a transient storm, exactly as it was on the day of the revolt. Would the king of France, supposing his restoration probable, find his kingdom in the same condition? Oh no, sir! Many long, long labours would be required to restore that country to any sort of good order. Why? because their rebellion is the direct contrary to that of Flanders. It is a *revolt of innovation*; and thereby, the very elements of society have been confounded and dissipated. Small politicians will certainly recommend to him to nourish a democratical party, in order to curb the aristocratic and the clerical. In general, all policy founded on discord is perilous to the prince and fatal to the country. The support of the permanent orders in their places, and the reconciling them all to his government, will be his best security, either for governing quietly in his own person, or for leaving any sure succession to his posterity. Corporations, which have a perpetual succession, and hereditary *noblesse*, who themselves exist by succession, are the true guardians of monarchical succession. On such orders and institutions alone an hereditary monarchy can stand. What they call *Démocratie Royale* in France, is laughed at by the very authors as an absurd chimera. Where all things are elective, you may call a king hereditary, but he is for the present a cipher; and

the succession is not supported by any analogy in the state, nor combined with any sentiments whatsoever existing in the minds of the people. It is a solitary, unsupported, anomalous thing.

The story you tell of the *Chartreux* in the time of Charles the Fifth, may be true for anything I know to the contrary. But what inference can be drawn from it? Why should it be necessary to influence the people, at such a time as this, to rob the *Chartreux* who had no hand in that murder? Were the *Chartreux*, that I have seen at Paris, employed in committing or meditating murders? Are they so at La Trappe, or at the Grande Chartreuse, or anywhere else? Inferences will be made from such a story; I don't mean logical, but practical inferences, which will harden the hearts of men in this age of spoil, not only against them, but against a considerable portion of the human race. Some of these monks, in a sudden transport of fury, murdered somebody in the time of Charles the Fifth. What then? I am certain that not only in the time of Charles the Fifth, but now and at all times, and in all countries, and in the bosom of the dearest relations of life, the most dreadful tragedies have been, and are daily acted. Is it right to bring forth these examples to make us abhor these relations?

You observe that a sequestration from the connexions of society, makes the heart cold and unfeeling. I believe it may have that tendency, though this is more than I find to be fact, from the result of my observations and inquiries. But in the theory, it seems probable. However, as the greatest crimes do not arise so much from a want of feeling for others, as from an over-sensibility for ourselves, and an over-indulgence to our own desires, very sequestered people, (such as the *Chartreux*,) as they are less touched with the sympathies which soften the manners, are less engaged in the passions which agitate the mind. The best virtues can hardly be found among them; but crimes must be more rare in that form of society, than

in the active world. If I were to trust to my observation and give a verdict on it, I must depose that, in my experience, I have found that those who were most indulgent to themselves were (in the mass) less kind to others, than those who have lived a life nearer to self-denial. I go farther.—In my experience I have observed, that a luxurious softness of manners hardens the heart, at least as much as an overdone abstinence. I question much whether moral policy will justify us in an endeavour to interest the heart in favour of immoral, irregular, and illegal actions, on account of particular touching circumstances that may happen to attend the commission or the punishment of them. I know poets are apt enough to choose such subjects, in order to excite the high relish arising from the mixed sensations which will arise in that anxious embarrassment of the mind, whenever it finds itself in a locality where vices and virtues meet near their confines, where

— Mire sagaces falleret hospites  
Discrimen obscurum.

I think, of late, that the Parisian philosophers have done upon meditated system, what the poets are naturally led to by a desire of flattering the passions. To you, as a poet, this is to be allowed. To philosophers, one cannot be so indulgent. For, perhaps, ladies ought not to love too well, like the Phædras and Myrrhas of old, or the ancient or modern Eloises. They had better not pursue their lovers into convents of Carthusians, nor follow them in disguise to camps and slaughter-houses. But I have observed that the philosophers, in order to insinuate their polluted atheism into young minds, systematically flatter all their passions, natural and unnatural. They explode, or render odious or contemptible, that class of virtues which restrain the appetite. These are at least nine out of ten of the virtues. In the place of all this, they substitute a virtue which they call humanity or benevolence. By these means their morality has no

idea in it of restraint, or indeed of a distinct settled principle of any kind. When their disciples are thus left free, and guided only by present feeling, they are no longer to be depended upon for good or evil. The men who, to-day, snatch the worst criminals from justice, will murder the most innocent persons to-morrow.

EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUN., ESQ.

*August 16, 1791.*

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Your mother and I had a satisfaction which none but a son like you could enter into, upon our finding on our return to town last night your letter from Brussels. I had no doubt your reception would be what at first it was, on your family account, and what afterwards it was, on your own.

I shall perfectly keep secret all that you have told me, *from all manner of persons*. I ought to be cautious of seeking the ministers upon this business, because they have made no advances whatsoever to me on the subject; no, not so much as to thank me for my pamphlet. It is plain to me, that whatsoever the reason may be, they make use of the greatest reserve upon the subject, and that the diplomatic people hear nothing from them, with regard to it, that is not very ambiguous. I am really afraid to converse with them, and my fears extend to you. I think, indeed, your situation to be as delicate as one's imagination can represent anything. You have no confidence here, and no authority of any sort, except to communicate what you hear, with the assurance of some general good wishes towards the cause you adhere to. If those you correspond with here did enter heartily into your scheme of politics, your communications might enable them to forward what you mutually propose. If, on the contrary, their

politics should take a different turn, in giving intelligence to them, you are unknowingly acting as a spy upon those whom your whole soul is set upon serving. This would be a situation of all others the most horrid; that of betraying by being betrayed. It is not that I altogether distrust the dispositions of this administration; but the consequences of acting under those whose designs are uncertain, or who, in reality, may not be masters of their own designs, to my eyes, and will to yours, appear so perilous, that too many precautions cannot be used in your communications in anything which relates to this court, either with the leaders of the French royalists or with this ministry. It is dangerous for you fully to trust those by whom you are not fully trusted; and, whilst you give to the worthy persecuted persons you converse with in all sincerity, your advice, to the best of the faculties God has dispensed to you, you will take care how you excite in their minds any hopes, which neither you nor I have any probable prospect to see realized. My apprehensions are somewhat roused by a discourse I have had related to me from the Russian ambassador. He says (supposing my author right) that his court is perfectly well-disposed to the King of France, but that the King of Prussia's disposition, and those of his ministers, both at Berlin and at foreign courts, is very equivocal, to say the best of it: That he prevents the conclusion of the peace, and the relief intended by other powers, and that our court does not sway that of Prussia, but the contrary,—whatever appearances may be: That Mr. Pitt is secretly in the democratic interest, or, at least, wishes it to exist, in order to make it, in some way or other, subservient to his designs; and that for that end, he keeps up the present armament, when the apparent objects for which he armed no longer exist: That M. de Calonne lately made a very indiscreet visit here; and, without Mr. Pitt's having given him any other encouragement than that of civil language, and of very general assurances, he laid himself perfectly open to him, and

communicated to him every part of the measures taken or proposed, on the part of the exiled princes, and on that of the powers who were willing to engage in their favour: That Mr. Pitt has kept Hugh Elliot from his court, where his presence might at this season be of the greatest moment; that he is a declared democrat (this I know to be true), and has been sent confidentially to Paris, where he has conversed with Barnave, &c. &c. &c.

I allow, in this account, for something that may be overcharged from the ill-humour of the Russian minister at this time; still, however, it tallies too much with appearances to be entirely overlooked. There is a little, busy, meddling man, little heard of till lately,—a Mr. Ewart, who has married, I am told, a Prussian. He had found the means of ingratiating himself with the late minister, Hertsberg, by verbal and practical flatteries; and is likely to do the same with his successor. He is said to avail himself, with each of the courts, of his influence with the others; and by his mutually playing their games, or rather his own, to obtain ribbons, pensions, titles, and other rewards, according to the fashion of this diplomatic season. I have reason to believe, that the fear of the French faction here begins to wear out of the minds of ministers; and, as it does, they grow more indifferent about its prevalence elsewhere. Perhaps they are not sorry for its progress in other parts, as it may tend to keep other powers in fear for their own safety, and mutually embroiled with each other. This is, indeed, a very vulgar and very false policy; but its vulgarity gives it an easy reception. I have been long persuaded, that those in power here, instead of governing their ministers at foreign courts, are entirely swayed by them. That corps has no one point of manly policy in their whole system; they are a corps of intriguers, who, sooner or later, will turn our offices into an academy of cabal and confusion. The single point upon which all our policy in this business turns, is, whether, if the French can

establish their scheme, so as to give it any kind of firmness and duration, we can rationally expect to preserve our constitution and domestic tranquillity for any considerable length of time? *Our* minds are made up on this question; *theirs* seem to be governed by the humours of the people here, and their complexion at every period, and are, therefore, constantly varying. This gives, occasionally, a great advantage to those who make the Russian objects not, what they ought to be, *secondary* to this great scheme of European policy,—that of preserving things in their actual condition,—but *principal*. The King of Prussia certainly has objects, of which he will not readily lose sight. I do not suspect that our court will directly go to war with any power whatsoever, to enable him to accomplish his designs; but what I apprehend is, that they will think, that by keeping themselves in a state of ambiguous neutrality, neither distinctly encouraging, nor directly declaring against the activity of other powers, they may be able to give the law to those sovereigns, when they are so implicated in this business as to find it impossible to retreat; and thus to compass the King of Prussia's objects, without formally involving themselves in a war. I am not without a suspicion of something of this sort; I cannot conceive for what other purpose the armament is kept up. It cannot influence the Russian treaty, or the congress of Sistova; because it is plain that this year it cannot go into the Baltic, and where else is it to act? It certainly is not meant to *assist* the powers who are allied for the support of the monarchies and republics of Europe, against the system of universal sedition professed in France. I cannot believe that it is designed against them. I can, therefore, divine no other reason for its being kept in force, but in order to watch events; and to act even in favour of the French usurpation, if collateral objects might be compassed by it. Yet when I consider the known disposition of the king and the prince,—the clear interest of the monarchy,—the joy expressed by the

ministers, in common with that of all honest men, at the King of France's escape,—and their confusion and consternation on his being apprehended,—I can hardly persuade myself, that, for a town or two to be obtained by the King of Prussia, they will hazard the very being of every state of Europe, our own included. However, I am sure that the whole of the appearances are so uncertain, that from a regard to your honour, and the fidelity you will wish to preserve to the great trust that is reposed in you, until some authentic declaration is made of an amicable neutrality, or till you hear from me, you will be cautious what you communicate to office here; and that you will, indeed, communicate nothing *without the previous consent of the parties interested*; professing your opinion of the *possibility* of this court not being cordially with them. All this, however, must be subject to your discretion in some degree. Your caution is not to defeat the object which you had in your journey, and which you have so near your heart; which I earnestly pray you may keep near to it, as long as events shall render such an attachment consistent with the state of the world. This league is for the preservation of that state of things in Europe, to which we owe all that we are, and which furnished just grounds of expectation for further and safe improvement. The foundation of this league is just and honest. But if it must go, we must not struggle with the order of Providence, nor contrive our matters so ill, that, as Cicero says, whilst we are struggling to be in the republic of Plato, we may find ourselves in no republic at all.

I perfectly agree with you, that the manifesto ought to accompany the act, or at least to precede it but a little. Perhaps some movements ought to precede the manifesto,—such as that of the King of Sweden to his minister, which I think to be exceedingly well done, and to be not at all ill-timed. The manifesto certainly ought, as you observe, to turn much more upon the benefit of the people; on good order, religion, morality, security, and property, than upon the rights

of sovereigns. Previous to it, or along with it, ought to be published, strong collections of cases and facts of the cruelties, persecutions, and desolations produced by this revolution, in a popular style; which, for being simple and popular, will not be the less eloquent and impressive. In stating the treatment of the ecclesiastics who have suffered most, as many particulars of their indigence, by reduction, slack or non-payment, or the like, ought to be brought forth. Particulars make impressions. This may be cooked up a hundred different ways. Imprisonments under the new, ought to be compared with those under the old regimen, &c. &c. For a plan of the manifesto, quere?—Whether it might not be necessary to begin by stating that the fundamental constitution of France was a monarchy; (and that the country had been powerful and prosperous under it;) that France had been always taken and understood as a monarchy; and that, with its monarchy, all the treaties now existing were formed; that these treaties (especially those which stipulated close friendship) imply at least the choice of a guarantee to the monarchy, and security to the monarch, against foreign force or domestic rebellion. Strongly to state the rebellion,—its nature; provoked by no oppression, no grievance supported, no offender protected; full of treachery, as applying the powers derived from the crown to its destruction; and when called to strengthen his government, perfidiously subverting it;—an entire usurpation;—that certain orders and ranks were in the essence of the French constitution, and highly beneficial to the nation; that a certain established religion, with certain legal possessions,—were the old common law of France;—a judicature arising from the authority of the throne, also of immemorial usage, of great benefit;—all these subverted:—Then, the grievances under the new constitution; the disappearance of money, from the insecurity of property; the fraudulent and insolvent scheme of a paper currency:—Then, all the grievances of the new regi-

men :—An assurance that they mean nothing against the *true* ancient rights, liberties, and privileges of the people, or anything which the public wisdom, acting without restraint, may contrive for their further benefit :—That it is for *that very purpose* the restoration of the king and monarchy is desired. Remember always, that the tyranny of the present usurping government be principally insisted on.

I told you that the ministers had taken no notice of my book. It was then true. But this day I have had the enclosed civil note from Dundas. The success of this last pamphlet is great indeed.<sup>1</sup> Every one tells me that it is thought much better than the former.<sup>2</sup> I have no objection to their thinking so; but it is not my opinion. It may, however, be more useful. Not one word from one of our party. They are secretly galled. They agree with me to a tittle; but they dare not speak out, for fear of hurting Fox. As to me, they leave me to myself; they see that I can do myself justice. Dodsley is preparing a third edition; the second I have corrected.

Since I wrote the two first sheets I have seen Mr. Dundas, and have received a most complete and satisfactory assurance of the neutrality, at least amicable, of this court. To say the truth, I asked him his opinion directly, and without management. But he set me quite at my ease, not only with regard to himself, but to every sub-division of the ministry, who all agreed, and very heartily, in this point. He went further, and said that the King of Prussia was not only well-disposed, but hearty, in the same cause. A letter which Adey<sup>3</sup> received from St. Leger spoke such language on the subject as prepared me for this very good account. I doubt, on the whole, whether the Emperor is more in earnest than he. All thought of an increase of territory on the side of Poland, for

<sup>1</sup> *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.*

<sup>2</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Thurston Adey, afterwards Member of Parliament for Higham Ferrers.

the present at least, is completely given up; and it is thought that he and the Emperor are come to a perfectly good understanding with each other. You see our armament is laid up. The king is himself (and I confess, considering everything, it is highly generous, and wise, too, in him) most earnest in favour of this cause of sovereigns. He is constantly asking whether the King of France will be firm, and reject the constitution. In short, everything external is as favourable to these unhappy persecuted people<sup>1</sup> as possible; but through weakness, irresolution, and the spirit of intrigue, they betray themselves their own garrison. The enclosed letter, from our Paris correspondent, will show you where the danger lies. That most unfortunate woman<sup>2</sup> is not to be cured of the spirit of court intrigue, even by a prison; and it is certain that all miserable people, whose spirits are become abject by calamities and insults, grow out of humour with their friends; and, as the mind must be fed with some sort of hope, begin to repose theirs in their enemies. All low politicians aim at working with their adversaries, by which means they give them strength, and become their prey. She is not to be cured of the politics of Brienne; and as all people of honour are fled, she is wholly in the hands of those who profess to save her from the last evils in her situation, and by overcharging her danger, get her to put herself into the hands of those who will engage to free her at the price of abandoning those of whose success she is jealous. On the 25th they are to propose this constitution of theirs to the king. They have already relaxed his chains, and they mean to put him (nominally, to be sure) at complete liberty. They have reconciled him to La Fayette. People do not doubt but that he will accept. I sketched a few hints to be sent to her by the Duke of Dorset. He thinks he can get a perfectly safe hand.

After all, if this unfortunate pair should put the

<sup>1</sup> The King and Queen of France.

<sup>2</sup> The Queen of France.

last hand to their disgrace and degradation, the honest and spirited part of the French nation, who must then act in trust for the whole, know very well that the monarchy of France is not in the disposal of any one of its kings; and that he cannot, even by his freest consent, destroy his throne, his nobility, his church, his tribunals, his corporations, his orders, and the general tenure of property among his subjects:—That he has no assembly competent to represent the nation:—That this assembly is a manifest usurpation, and had obtained its power by frauds, violences, and crimes:—That their constitution, to which they will pretend the free consent of the king, had been before presented to him, part by part, in detail; that he had consented to them; that, afterwards, he had declared that consent to have been extorted by terror; and that, at the time, he had been a prisoner. Has he been less so since that declaration? And can it be presumed that he approves, in the whole, that thing which, after having approved in the parts, he has afterwards disowned in the whole and all the parts? This last act, instead of being a proof of his liberty, is a tenfold proof of his slavery. And even if he were really and truly at liberty, yet his mind having been completely broken by repeated previous insults, and now under terrors by the strength of a faction still calling for his life through a trial, and his child having been actually taken from him, and held as an hostage, no act of his can or ought to be considered as that of a king of France;—separated from his family, from all the princes of his blood, his *noblesse*, and the magistrates of his parliaments,—the natural friends and constitutional guardians of the rights of the crown. I think they<sup>1</sup> ought, after such a step, not to lose a moment, but to protest against the act, as under constraint, and as invalid in itself, if free. To renew their allegiance to him, their declaration of fidelity to the fundamental laws, and to the nation, properly under-

<sup>1</sup> The French princes.

stood and constitutionally represented; to call the scattered members of the parliament together; to assume the regency; to call upon those allied in blood, interest, and friendship, with the crown of France, to assist them; and to act without the least regard to what he may seem to have done. This is my fixed opinion; and they ought not to be frightened with the voice of those people who, between weakness of nerves and want of fixed principles of morals and politics, betray every cause that they have in hand. How come these fierce republicans, even the very firebrands of the Jacobins, all at once to pretend this affection to royalty, but in order to betray it more effectually through the means of the stuffed skin of a monarch?

I was at the levée yesterday, as the rule is, when the king sends you a civil message. Nothing could be more gracious than my reception. He told me that he did not think anything could be added to what I had first written; but he saw he was mistaken, that there was very much added, and new, and important, and, what was most material, what could not be answered. He then asked me whether I had seen that scheme of absurdity, the French constitution, and what I thought of it. I told him I had seen all the flowers separately, and did not like them better now that I had seen them tied up in one *bouquet*; I told him that the absurdity of this usurpation would do its own business, if not prevented by the weakness of one man. After the levée, he asked Dundas who he thought was the one man I meant,—whether it was the king? He said he believed it was, as it was most certainly. I had afterwards a conversation with Dundas at his office.

I send this through some hand that he provides. I think it better to send you a packet of all our letters than to detail their contents. I dine to-morrow at Dundas's with Mr. Pitt and Sir David Dalrymple.

The taking away the Dauphin ought to be much

insisted on; the giving him into the hands of the known enemies of the Crown as guardians; the choosing as preceptor, Condorcet,—the most furious of the heads of the Jacobin club, and a known enemy and despiser of the Christian religion,—to educate the most Christian king; the very same turbulent and seditious libeller whom, without naming, they have alluded to as such in all their debates, and have accordingly suspended the effect of their ballot. Their disposition, however, has not been the less shown, because their quarrel prevented the execution of their intentions. By the way, though not connected with this, when the king's consent is talked of, of what importance is it, when his negative is taken away wholly, and only amounts to a time for deliberation, whether he assents or not, to any law whatsoever?

The question is higher still in this case:—Whether they have a right to suppose the king as in a moment of election, and to offer him the crown on just what terms they please? This is to suppose the crown elective, to all intents and purposes. Take this, or you are not to reign!

. . . . .<sup>1</sup>

*The following memorandum was found amongst Burke's papers, indorsed as follows by himself.*

Sketch of a letter to the late Queen of France, to be sent through the Comte de Mercy Argenteau. But he pretended that it would make too large a paquet for him to risk. He only sent two or three of the last lines, if he sent any. I suspect he did not enter very warmly into my sentiments; indeed, I am sure he did not.

E. B.

Circumstances require that my words should be few; my sentiments demand that they should be faithful; they cannot be ceremonious.

<sup>1</sup> The passages omitted in this letter relate to private affairs.

Since the commencement of these troubles, you had a part to act which has fixed the eyes of the world upon you. You have suffered much affliction, but you have obtained great glory. Your conduct at this great crisis will determine whether the glory is to continue and the affliction to cease, or whether affliction and shame together are to attend on your life and your memory, as long as both shall last. Your place, your dangers, your interest, your fame, the great objects of your fears and hopes, will not suffer your conduct to be governed by little politics.

It cannot be supposed for an instant, that you can think of recommending any settlement whatsoever, which must dishonour, proscribe, and banish all the king's friends, and those of the monarchy and the church; and to place the whole power of the kingdom in the hands of their known enemies, who have never omitted any indignity or insult to your person, or your fame, and have made several attempts on your life.

For God's sake, have nothing to do with traitors. Those men who have been the authors of your common ruin, can never be seriously disposed to restore the nation, the king, yourself, or your children. If they had the inclination, their power has not solidity, consistency, or means of permanence sufficient, to enable them to keep any engagements they may seem to make with you. Their whole power is to hurt you;—to serve you they have none.

If the king accepts their pretended constitution, you are both of you undone for ever. The greatest powers in Europe are hastening to your rescue. They all desire it. You can never think this a time for surrendering yourself to traitors, along with the rights of all the sovereigns allied to you, and whose cause is involved in yours.

You will be told by intriguing people, that your own personal influence and consideration will be swallowed up in that of the faithful princes and

nobility who have abandoned their country in the royal cause, and who now risk all that remains of their fortunes and their hopes for your relief. No, madam ! Faithful souls do not know what it is to be insolent and overbearing. These are the qualities of the persons who rule at present. The loyal French will consider your patience and fortitude as an ample contingent contributed to the general cause ; and your claim to influence will not be only as the queen, but as the deliverer of France.

But if (which God forbid) your majesty should be persuaded by mischievous caballers to do anything which may confirm and fix the power of traitors, they will not use it in favour of your majesty, of the king, or of your royal offspring which they have torn out of your bosom. No !—The king will have no *real* authority whatsoever ; and what shadow of it may be allotted to his name, will be employed for their own purposes, by those men who have given it, and who, when they please, may resume it. But those faithful subjects who wish to restore the king, not to nominal, but to real power, know very well that, when they have succeeded in their design, their very success must make them dependent upon him.

The intriguers will tell your majesty that all men are alike, and that the Barnaves, the Lameths, the Chapeliers, and the La Fayettees, are as good as any other, if they can be made serviceable to you. This is a most fatal error. All men are not courtiers or chicaners ; or, if it were true that we are all evil, the interests of some men are more connected with yours than that of others.

Madam,—all is in your hands. The moment you begin to negotiate with the traitors, you lose your greatest strength, which is wholly in patience, firmness, silence, and refusal. You cannot take an active measure which does not lead to destruction.

Madam,—warm zeal will sometimes be an excuse for presumptuous intrusion. This paper goes to your majesty from a foreigner, but from one who has

given the only proof in his power of his sincere admiration of your virtues, and of his hearty devotion to your interests.

*Note in Burke's handwriting:*

[N.B. This is the rough draft. Some alterations were made ;—none affecting the subject.]

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUNIOR, ESQ.

*September 26, 1791, Monday morning.*

I WRITE to you from a consideration of the possibility that you have changed your mind, and are still at Coblentz.

An expression in the short note I received from Monsieur de Calonne makes me imagine that you are on your journey hither ; though I was in hopes, from what you had written by Nagle, that you would not move until you should hear from us, and had left our judgement to operate on that measure ; we still, either your uncle or myself, wrote to you, letter after letter, to desire you to stay at Coblentz, until we should see your presence to be more useful here than there. You might be sure, that though my hopes were not very lively, my endeavours would be continual. As soon as I got your letter, without losing a moment's time, I went to Mr. Dundas. Disappointed in my expectation of meeting him at Wimbledon, last Sunday morning, (se'nnight) I stayed in town till Tuesday, when I saw him. We had some discourse, the result of which you have in a short letter from him, and a long one which, with several papers and letters, I sent by his packet. That letter informed you of the state of things to that moment. He recommended me to write the whole of the conversation I had with him, to Lord Grenville, then at Weymouth. It was Lord G.'s department ; and I had reason to think the disposition of all the ministers pretty equally favourable to the cause, as far as they would go. It was something to know that they had never given the pretended answer to the Emperor's

declaration. You will see presently, out of what materials that pretended answer was made. On my return to the country, I wrote to Lord Grenville. He received the letter on his way to town; and immediately on his arrival here, wrote to me in a very obliging manner, that he would be glad that I should talk over the matter with him and Mr. Pitt; that they dined without company, and would be glad to see me. I came to town that day, saw them, and dined with them. Our discourse continued until eleven o'clock. We talked the whole matter over very calmly, and it was discussed, on my part, as fully as my faculties gave me leave to do. I found that there was no moving them from their idea of a neutrality; therefore, I did not labour this point. My view was to get over *practically* the difficulty which they made with regard to the solicitation of any other powers, which was contained in the declaration of Mr. Aust, (first clerk in Lord Grenville's office,) to the Chevalier de la Bintinnaye, made by Lord G.'s directions before his return to town; and which was, if I recollect right, contained in the king's letter to Monsieur, of which a copy was communicated to the chevalier. As to anything to be done with regard to a solicitation of the Emperor, I soon found it fruitless to attempt it. Their ill opinion of his intentions seems immovable. They are convinced that he is resolved not to give the princes, at any time, any assistance whatsoever. I therefore thought, (what I had rolled in my mind before,) that the true place of application would be to the King of Prussia, who I am convinced is infinitely more in earnest than the Emperor. He has been led to take his part at the solicitation of the Emperor. He has declared himself a joint party with him. He has thrown off all appearance of neutrality, and put himself ill with the new power rising in France, at his original requisition; and he has a right to call upon the Emperor not to leave him in the lurch on account of difficulties thrown in his way by this court, which have no existence. I proposed that they should,

without appearing directly in it, send some person of confidence to Berlin, to suggest this to the King of Prussia, without going through the official channel; and for the execution of this plan, I proposed you, excluding the idea of any salary, gratuity, reward, or office whatsoever, or the promise or hope of such a thing. To this I had no answer. Our discussions were too extensive to admit my writing them to you; I wish rather to give you the result of them; and to tell you the temper in which I found and left the two ministers. They are certainly right as to their general inclinations;—perfectly so, I have not a shadow of doubt; but at the same time, they are cold and dead as to any attempt whatsoever to give them effect. Two causes seem to have produced in them this coldness: the first, that they seem to be quite out of all apprehensions of any effect from the French revolution on this kingdom, either at present, or at any time to come:—the next, their rooted opinion of the settled systematic ill disposition of the Emperor. As to the first, you know my fixed opinion; and I did not fail to lay the grounds upon which I formed it before them: as to the last, I referred it to their consideration, whether the conduct of the Emperor was not rather owing to some complexional inconstancy, and to the little occasional intrigues with the Louvre, than to any fixed, premeditated scheme of treachery. I am sure this is a fair hypothesis; and it is what I believe to be true. They entertained an opinion, in which, whilst they condemned the Emperor for pretending it, (not thinking it his true motive for delay,) they concurred at bottom with him;—that is, that the present is not the fit time for acting;—that a bankruptcy, which appears inevitable, would ruin the assembly in the opinion of the stockholders and of the Parisians, and would create much discontent and confusion through the kingdom. I entered very fully into the effect of such a bankruptcy, particularly in the present state of the French funds;—that I expected no good from it, if it were even to happen

at any assignable period ;—that to make the invasion synchronize with that bankruptcy, might not be so easy ;—that now they had Europe in a situation in which it never stood before, and might never be again ;—a general peace among the powers, and a general good disposition to support the common cause of order and government. I found too, that they thought the Netherlands in such a situation, that it would not be safe for the Emperor to withdraw his army from them. I confess I never hear this without astonishment. I thought the danger to consist in his keeping so great an army inactive in that situation. I used your arguments, and many more that occurred to me ; and on the whole discussion, I do not think a topic escaped me. They were patient and good-humoured ; and to myself, personally, I thought far from unfavourable. Every now and then I seemed to make an impression on them, and that not slightly ; but the next morning, when the Chevalier de la Bintinnaye had his audience of Lord Grenville, in which he was well received, the general answer was just that which had been before given by Mr. Aust, without any variation whatsoever. In the conversation, Lord Grenville denied positively that he had put anything like a condition on the Emperor, or any limitation whatsoever. That all he said was a mere opinion, stated in discourse with the imperial minister :—‘ that in the actual state of the Netherlands, it might not be expedient, for the general tranquillity, to leave them without troops.’ This, merely as the expression of a sentiment, without any sort of stipulation, expressed or implied. The Emperor is plainly at liberty, and his delay does not lie at our door. As to the Comte de Mercy, they told me that they had not had a single word of political conversation with him ; that they did not shun it, but they left him to begin it ; which, as he never did, they, on their part, said nothing. It was from me that they first learned that he attributed the Emperor’s inaction (which he stated as a resolution) to the ambiguous conduct and

language of our court. In none of their conversations about the Low-Country troops, did they, that I can find, say anything of the *number* to be kept there. They left him to himself. They declared a neutrality, I believe, as clearly and definitely, to the imperial minister, as they have done to the agent of the Bourbon princes. I am sorry it is so very literally a neutrality ; but such as it is, *their having so completely disarmed*, is a proof worth ten thousand declarations, that they do not mean to give any assistance, directly or indirectly, to this French system ; even if the imperial court could think our court unadvised enough to give its hand to the establishment of a fanatical democracy just at its door. The truth is, I am afraid, that the Emperor and some of his ministers, though they do not approve (as they cannot approve) of the destruction of the monarchy, are infinitely pleased with the robbery of the church property, and the humiliation of the gentry ; and that, in that lust of philosophical spoliation and equalization, he forgets that he cuts down the supports of monarchy, and, indeed, destroys those principles of property, order, and regularity, for which alone any rational man can wish monarchy to exist. But the difference among the race who have got the present education, is only, whether the same robbery is to be committed by the despotism of an individual, or that of a multitude ; and, therefore, that the Emperor has made the parade of a threatening, and of a threatening only, that this vile assembly may be induced to treat, to secure some affluence and liberty to the king and queen, leaving the church robbed, and the nobility beggared and degraded. This is what we fear. It is what we ought to do our best to prevent, and to engage the Emperor in a system of politics more conformable to the true interests, rights, and duties, of sovereigns. I have read the declaration of the Bourbon princes. You have, if you are still at Coblenz, by this, a very rude sketch of a bill of rights, which ought to be agreed to in a general meeting of princes, nobles, and magistrates

I think it well penned, and in many points very right and proper. But the *ton* is not just what one would wish in all points. In some things it is dangerously defective. They ought to promise distinctly and without ambiguity, that they mean, when the monarchy, as the essential basis, shall be restored, to secure with it a free constitution; and that for this purpose they will cause, at a meeting of the states, freely chosen, according to the ancient legal order, to vote by order, all *Lettres de Cachet*, and other means of arbitrary imprisonment, to be abolished. That all taxation shall be by the said states, conjointly with the king. That responsibility shall be established, and the public revenue put out of the power of abuse and malversation; a canonical synod of the Gallican church to reform all abuses; and (as unfortunately the king has lost all reputation) they should pledge themselves, with their lives and fortunes, to support, along with their king, those conditions and that wise order, which can alone support a free and vigorous government. Without such a declaration, or to that effect, they can hope no converts. For my part, for one, though I make no doubt of preferring the ancient course, or almost any other, to this vile chimera, and sick man's dream of government, yet I could not actively, or with a good heart and clear conscience, go to the re-establishment of a monarchical despotism in the place of this system of anarchy. I should think myself obliged to withdraw myself wholly from such a competition, and give repose to my age, as I should wish you to give other employment to your youth. I wish you to stay where you are; the *Bintinnayes* work well. They are steady, sensible, and have business-like heads, and are indefatigable. They are well received. They are preparing another memorial. We shall not be negligent; no stone will be left unturned. You may be infinitely more useful where you are; you have more resources and more activity than I have; but I have more authority *here*, and that turns the balance. But do as you please; I shall think it for the best.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUNIOR, ESQ.

*January 26, 1792.*

MY DEAREST RICHARD,

Though we should be happy in hearing from you often, yet when we know that you are well, the first object of our wish is accomplished. We should hear from you if you had anything pleasant to tell. Though we have nothing from you, we hear on all hands that the Castle has omitted nothing to break that line of policy which government has pursued as opportunity offered from the beginning of the present reign:—that, I mean, of wearing out the vestiges of conquest, and settling all descriptions of people on the bottom of one protecting and constitutional system. But by what I learn, the Castle has another system, and considers the outlawry (or what at least I look on as such) of the great mass of the people as an unalterable maxim in the government of Ireland. If I considered only the interest of that mass of the people, I should be indifferent about their loss of their just, rational, and wise object of pursuit during this session. They *will* have it, because the nature of things *will* do it. What vexes me is, that it will not be done in the best, the most gracious, the most conciliatory, and the most politic mode. In the present state of Europe, in which the state of these kingdoms is included, it is of infinite moment that matters of grace should emanate from the old sovereign authority. The harmony of the two kingdoms requires that the king's government should not stand chargeable with anything proscriptive or oppressive, or which leans with a weight of odium and prejudice on any quiet description of his subjects. Above all, it requires that no harsh measure should seem the result of any unalterable principle of his government;—for that would be to leave the people no hope from that quarter, from which alone I should wish them to hope everything. But I shall not trouble you or myself further with what neither you nor I can help.

Cazalès goes off shortly. His spirits have been greatly sunk ;—I do not wonder at it. The madness, the wickedness, the malice, and the folly, of the greatest part of Germany, is not to be expressed. The Duke of Wurtemberg takes the lead in Suabia against the persecuted nobility of France, who are hunted from place to place like so many wild boars. The Bintinnayes are well, but in the same state of dejection as Cazalès.

I wish that in the unpleasant view of public affairs, we were compensated by anything cheerful with regard to our narrower circle. Thank God ! with regard to this house, all is well, or perhaps better than you left it. Your mother, your uncle, and all of us, in the best health. Our poor friend Sir Joshua declines daily. For some time past he has kept his bed. His legs, and all his body, swell extremely ; yet his physicians are by no means sure that the case is dropsical. I have been twice called to town by very alarming letters from poor Miss Palmer, who feared that the worst was more nearly at hand than it was. I returned from my second journey yesterday. He was somewhat better when I left town, and this morning we had an account of the event of the day after I had left him. He still continued in appearance to mend. The swelling had abated. He takes great doses of laudanum. At times he has pain ; but for the most part he is tolerably easy. Nothing can equal the tranquillity with which he views his end. He congratulates himself on it as a happy conclusion of a happy life. He spoke of you in a style which was affecting. I don't believe there are any persons he valued more sincerely than you and your mother. Surely it is well returned by you both. Mary and the captain salute you, and the friends they know in Dublin. Your mother's affectionate blessing. May God always protect you !

Ever, ever, my dearest Richard,  
Your affectionate father,  
EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO WILLIAM  
WEDDELL,<sup>1</sup> ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, January 31, 1792,  
Late at night.*

MY DEAR SIR,

Not less than twenty times, I verily believe, have I taken up my pen to write to you something which was suggested to me by your most friendly and obliging letter. But because I had too much to say, I have said nothing at all. Your letter, indeed, did not absolutely require an answer. My best thanks were certainly your due; but I hoped that the same partial goodness which dictated your letter, would presume that I entertained becoming and natural sentiments on your conduct towards me under the dereliction of so many of my old acquaintance. To thank you was all that I was called upon to do; and, for not doing this, I stand in need of some apology. But, as, along with your friendly expressions of personal kindness, some topics were touched upon that made an impression on my mind, so many thoughts crowded upon me, both with relation to the party by which I had been disclaimed, and with relation to the country with which my ties cannot be dissolved, that I feared, if I should touch upon them, I should be drawn on to write, not a long letter, but a tedious dissertation.—‘Whilst I was on the Terrace of Windsor, I little thought of what was going on at York.’—Most certainly I did not. As to the reception of Mr. Fox, with all the circumstances of honour according to their several modes, by the Corporation and the people of York, if this had been done to efface the impressions which had been made upon many by the conduct of several persons in that city and county in the year 1784, I should have been exceedingly

<sup>1</sup> Member of Parliament for Malton.

pleased.<sup>1</sup> I should have found but one thing to regret, which was, that their returning sentiments of approbation did not extend further. I should have thought, if that had been the object of those demonstrations of their attachment to Mr. Fox, it would not have been amiss if they had shown some marks of respect, at the same time, to yourself, to Lord John Cavendish. and to Mr. Foljambe. The assertion of the principles, at that time common to us all, and the circumstances of the county and city at that crisis, would have given a more *local* propriety to expressions of sorrow, with regard to mistakes into which their province had fallen, in common with a large part of the nation in other quarters. But they were not guilty of any omission at all; because they had nothing less in their view than the transactions of 1784. Instead of looking to that period, the memory of which had not been obliterated by a very long prescription, they forgot what passed before their own eyes not above seven years from that time, and flew back to the history of what had happened an hundred years before. But they were not such mere antiquarians as they seemed to be. In their unprecedented compliment to Mr. Fox for governing his conduct by the true principles of the revolution, they plainly alluded to a transaction not quite an hundred years old. He is the first private man to whom such a compliment, I am persuaded, has ever been made. It must have a reference to something done or said relative to the principles of the revolution; and if I were dull enough to mistake what that doing and saying was, I should be the only man in England who did not perfectly enter into it. When I combined all the circumstances, though I wish Mr. Fox all other modes of honour, I cannot say that I was not concerned at this event. It was not just at York (where I was with Lord Rockingham at those very races twenty-six years before, and there first had any

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Burke refers to the presentation of the freedom of the city of York to Mr. Fox.

acquaintance in that county,) that I apprehended, in the praises of another, I should have found an oblique censure, and the first vote against me amongst the judges to whom I had addressed my appeal. That, too, must go with the rest.

In that piece,<sup>1</sup> I have quite satisfied my own conscience; and I have done what I thought due to my own reputation, so far as the public is concerned. Now let me say a word to you, on what would not have been so proper to say to the public, as it regards the particular interests of the party, and my conduct towards them and their leader, Mr. Fox.

As to the party which has thought proper to proscribe me on account of a book which I published on the idea, that the principles of a new, republican, frenchified Whiggism, were gaining ground in this country, I cannot say it was written *solely* with a view to the service of that party. I hope its views were more general. But I am perfectly sure this was *one* of the objects in my contemplation; and I am hardly less sure, that (bating the insufficiency of the execution) it was well calculated for that purpose; and that it had actually produced that effect upon the minds of all those at whose sentiments it is not disrespectful to guess. Possibly it produced that effect without that exception. Mr. Montagu knows, many know, what a softening towards our party it produced in the thoughts and opinions of many men in many places. It presented to them sentiments of liberty which were not at war with order, virtue, religion, and good government; and though, for reasons which I have cause to rejoice that I listened to, I disclaimed myself as the organ of any party, it was the general opinion that I had not wandered very widely from the sentiments of those with whom I was known to be so closely connected. It was indeed then, and it is much more so now, absolutely necessary to separate those who cultivate a rational and sober liberty upon

<sup>1</sup> 'An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs,' published in 1791

the plan of our existing constitution, from those who think they have no liberty, if it does not comprehend a right in them of making to themselves new constitutions at their pleasure.

The party with which I acted had, by the malevolent and unthinking, been reproached, and by the wise and good always esteemed and confided in, as an aristocratic party. Such I always understood it to be, in the true sense of the word. I understood it to be a party, in its composition and in its principles, connected with the solid, permanent, long-possessed property of the country; a party which, by a temper derived from that species of property, and affording a security to it, was attached to the ancient tried usages of the kingdom; a party, therefore, essentially constructed upon a ground-plot of stability and independence; a party, therefore, equally removed from servile court compliances, and from popular levity, presumption, and precipitation.

Such was the general opinion of the substance and original stamina of that party. For one, I was fully persuaded that the spirit, genius, and character of that party *ought* to be adopted, and, for a long time, I thought *was* adopted, by all the *new* men who in the course of time should be aggregated to that body; whether any of these *new* men should be a person possessed of a large fortune of his own creating; or whether the *new* man should be (though of a family long decorated with the honours and distinctions of the state,) only a younger brother, who had an importance to acquire by his industry and his talents; —or whether the *new* man should be (as was my case,) *wholly* new in the country, and aimed to illustrate himself and his family by the services he might have the fortune to render to the public. All these descriptions of new men, and more, if more there are, I conceived, without any formal engagement, by the very constitution of the party, to be bound with all the activity and energy of minds animated and awakened by great hopes and views, to support those aristo-

cratic principles, and the aristocratic interests connected with them, as essential to the real benefit of the body of the people, to which all names of party, all ranks and orders in the state, and even government itself, ought to be entirely subordinate. These principles and interests, I conceived, were to give the bias to all their proceedings. Adhering to these principles, the aspiring minds that exalt and vivify a party, could not be held in too much honour and consideration:—departing from them, they lose more than they can gain. They lose the advantages which they might derive from *such* a party, and they cannot make it fit for the purposes for which they desire to employ it. Such a party, pushed forward by a blind impulse, may for some time proceed without an exact knowledge of the point to which it is going. It may be deluded; and, by being deluded, it may be discredited and hurt; but it is too unwieldy, both from its numbers and from its property, to perform the services expected from a corps of light horse.

Against the existence of any such description of men as our party is in a great measure composed of,—against the existence of any mode of government on such a basis, we have seen a serious and systematic attack attended with the most complete success, in another country, but in a country at our very door. It is an attack made against the thing and against the name. If I were to produce an example of something diametrically opposite to the composition, to the spirit, to the temper, to the character, and to all the maxims of our old and unregenerated party, something fitted to illustrate it by the strongest opposition, I would produce—what has been done in France. I would except nothing. I would bring forward the principles; I would bring forward the means; I would bring forward the ultimate object. They who cry up the French revolution, cry down the party which you and I had so long the honour and satisfaction to belong to. ‘But that party was formed on a system of liberty.’ Without question it was;

and God forbid that you and I should ever belong to any party that was not built upon that foundation. But this French dirt-pie,—this its hateful contrast, is founded upon *slavery*; and a slavery which is not the less slavery, because it operates in an inverted order. It is a slavery the more shameful, the more humiliating, the more galling, upon that account, to every liberal and ingenuous mind. It is, on that account, ten thousand times the more destructive to the peace, the prosperity, and the welfare, in every instance, of that undone and degraded country in which it prevails.

My party principles, as well as my general politics and my natural sentiments, must lead me to detest the French revolution, in the act, in the spirit, in the consequences, and most of all, in the example. I saw the sycophants of a court, who had, by engrossing to themselves the favours of the sovereign, added to his distress and to the odium of his government, take advantage of that distress and odium to subvert his authority and imprison his person; and passing, by a natural progression, from flatterers to traitors, convert their ingratitude into a claim to patriotism, and become active agents in the ruin of that order, from their belonging to which they had derived all the opulence and power of their families. Under the auspices of these base wretches, I had seen a senseless populace employed totally to annihilate the ancient government of their country, under which it had grown, in extent, compactness, population, and riches, to a greatness even formidable; a government which discovered the vigour of its principle, even in the many vices and errors, both of its own and its people's, which were not of force enough to hinder it from producing those effects. They began its destruction by subverting, under pretext of rights of man, the foundations of civil society itself. They trampled upon the religion of their country, and upon all religion;—they systematically gave the rein to every crime and every vice. They destroyed the trade and manufactures of their country. They rooted up its

finances. They caused the greatest accumulation of coin, probably ever collected amongst any people, totally to disappear as by magic; and they filled up the void by a fraudulent, compulsory paper-currency, and a coinage of the bells from their churches. They possessed the fairest and the most flourishing colonies which any nation had perhaps ever planted. These they rendered a scene of carnage and desolation, that would excite compassion and remorse in any hearts but theirs. They possessed a vast body of nobility and gentry, *amongst* the first in the world for splendour, and the *very* first for disinterested services to their country; in which I include the most disinterested and incorrupt judicature (even by the confession of its enemies) that ever was. These they persecuted, they hunted down like wild beasts; they expelled them from their families and their houses, and dispersed them into every country in Europe; obliging them either to pine in fear and misery at home, or to escape into want and exile in foreign lands; nay, (they went so far in the wantonness of their insolence,) abrogated their very name and their titular descriptions, as something horrible and offensive to the ears of mankind.

The means by which all this was done leaves an example in Europe never to be effaced, and which no thinking man, I imagine, can present to his mind without consternation;—that is, the bribing of an immense body of soldiers, taken from the lowest of the people, to an universal revolt against their officers, who were the whole body of the country gentlemen, and the landed interest of the nation, to set themselves up as a kind of democratic military, governed and directed by their own clubs and committees!

When I saw all this mingled scene of crime, of vice, of disorder, of folly, and of madness, received by very many here, not with the horror and disgust which it ought to have produced, but with rapture and exultation, as some almost supernatural benefit showered down upon the race of mankind; and when I saw that arrangements were publicly made for communicating

to these islands their full share of these blessings, I thought myself bound to stand out, and by every means in my power to distinguish the ideas of a sober and virtuous liberty, (such as I thought our party had ever cultivated,) from that profligate, immoral, impious, and rebellious licence, which, through the medium of every sort of disorder and calamity, conducts to some kind or other of tyrannic domination.

At first I had no idea that this base contagion had gained any considerable ground in the party. Those who were the first and most active in spreading it, were their mortal and declared enemies; I mean the leading dissenters. They had long shown themselves wholly adverse to, and unalliable with, the party. They had shown it, as you know, signally, in 1784. At the time of the Regency, (which, when Price's sermon appeared,<sup>1</sup> was still green and raw,) they had seized the opportunity of divisions amongst the great, to bring forward their democratic notions; and the object against which they chiefly directed their seditious doctrines, and the passions of the vulgar, was your party; and I confess they were in the right in their choice; for they knew very well, that, as long as you were true to your principles, no considerable innovations could be made in the country; and that this independent embodied aristocracy would form an impenetrable fence against all their attempts to break into the constitution. When I came to town, though I had heard of Dr. Price's sermon, I had not read it. I dined the day of my arrival with our friend Dr. Walker King; and there, in a large and mixed company, partly composed of dissenters, one of that description, a most worthy man, of learning, sense, and ingenuity, one of the oldest and best friends I had in the world, and no way indisposed to us, lamented that the dissenters never could be reconciled to us, or confide in us, or hear of our being possessed of the

<sup>1</sup> This Sermon was preached on the 4th November, 1789, at the Old Jewry Meeting House to the Society for commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain

government of the country, as long as we were led by Fox ;—this was far from his own opinion ; but he declared that it was very general in that body, who regarded him, and spoke of him on all occasions, in a manner that one would not speak of some better sort of highwaymen. Of the rest of the party they had a good opinion ; but thought them weak men, and dupes, and the mere instruments of the person of whom they had conceived such unfounded ideas. I was warmed ; and continued, with vehemence, in a conversation which lasted some hours, to do justice to Mr. Fox ; and in as ample and strenuous a manner as I thought the duties of friendship, and a matter that touched the public interest, required. It is unnecessary to enter into further details on the subject. I went home, and, late as it was, before I went to bed, I read Dr. Price's sermon ; and *in that very sermon* (in which were all the shocking sentiments and seditious principles which I have endeavoured to expose) the leading feature was a personal invective against Mr. Fox,—very much in the style and manner (a trifle, indeed, less coarse,) in which my worthy friend had represented the general conversation of the dissenters, when Mr. Fox was the subject.

It was, I think, but a day or two after that conversation and reading, that I met Mr. Sheridan at Lord North's. He was just come to town ; and, of himself, he spoke with great resentment of the dissenters for their treatment of Mr. Fox in other parts of the kingdom ; which from him I learned was as bad, particularly at Birmingham, as in London. Concerning the French revolution not a word passed between us. I felt as Mr. Sheridan did, and it does not rest on my single assertion. It is known to others, that some part of the asperity with which I expressed myself against these gentlemen, arose from my resentment for their incurable and, as I thought, treacherous animosity to Mr. Fox ; particularly when I knew that, during the whole of the preceding summer, they were soliciting his friendship and connexion. However, they knew

Mr. Fox better than I did. The several shots they fired to bring him to, produced their effect. I take it for granted that public principles, connected with magnanimity of sentiment, made him equally regardless of their enmity and of my friendship;—regardless of my friendship, who was weak enough to adopt his cause with a warmth which his wisdom and temper condemned.

What I had thrown down on the first reading of Price's Declaration and Correspondence with France, was only in a few notes, (though intended for publication,) when Mr. Fox, to my great astonishment and sorrow, chose for his theme of panegyric on the French revolution, the behaviour of the French Guards. I said what occurred to me on that occasion.<sup>1</sup> The day ended with sentiments not very widely divided, and with unbroken friendship. I do not think that at any period of my life I have given stronger proofs of my attachment to that gentleman and to his party, than I had done after that explanation, during the whole of that session and the next, both within and without doors.

In the meantime the opinions, principles, and practices, which I thought so very mischievous, were gaining ground, particularly in our party. The festival of the fourteenth of July was celebrated with great splendour for the first time.<sup>2</sup> There Mr. Sheridan made a strong declaration of his sentiments, which was printed. All that could be got together of the party were convened at the Shakespeare the night before; that, as the expression was, they might go in force to that anniversary. Applications were made to some of the Prince of Wales's people, that it might appear to have his royal highness's countenance. These things, and many more, convinced me, that the best service which could be done to the party, and to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Burke probably refers to the debate on the 9th February, 1790.

<sup>2</sup> A dinner at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, on the 14th July, 1790, Earl Stanhope in the chair.

the prince, was to strike a strong blow at those opinions and practices which were carrying on for their common destruction.

As to the prince, I thought him deeply concerned that the ideas of an elective crown should not prevail. He had experienced, and you had all of you fully experienced, the peril of these doctrines on the question of the Regency. You know that I endeavoured, as well as I could, to supply the absence of Mr. Fox during that great controversy. You cannot forget that I supported the prince's title to the *regency* upon the principle of his hereditary right to the crown; and I endeavoured to explode the false notions, drawn from what had been stated as the revolution maxims, by much the same arguments which I afterwards used in my printed reflections. I endeavoured to show, that the hereditary succession could not be supported, whilst a person who had the chief interest in it was, during a virtual interregnum, excluded from the government; and that the direct tendency of the measure, as well as the grounds upon which it was argued, went to make the crown itself elective, contrary (as I contended) to the fundamental settlement made after the revolution. I meant to do service to the prince when I took this ground on the regency; I meant to do him service when I took the same ground in my publication.

Here the conduct of the party towards themselves, towards the prince, and (if with these names I could mix myself,) towards me, has been such as to have no parallel. The prince has been persuaded not only to look with all possible coldness on myself, but to lose no opportunity of publicly declaring his disapprobation of a book written to prove that the crown, to which (I hope) he is to succeed, is not elective. For this I am in disgrace at Carlton House. The prince, I am told, has expressed his displeasure that I have not mentioned in that book his right to the regency; I never was so astonished as when I heard this. In the first place, the persons against whom I maintained

that controversy had said nothing at all upon the subject of the regency. They went much deeper. I was weak enough to think that the succession to the *crown* was a matter of other importance to his royal highness than his right to the *regency*. At a time when the king was in perfect health, and no question existing of arrangements to be made, on a supposition of his falling into his former, or any other grievous malady, it would have been an imprudence of the first magnitude, and such as would have hurt the prince most essentially, if it were to be supposed he had given me the smallest encouragement to have wantonly brought on that most critical discussion. Not one of the friends whom his royal highness 'delighteth to honour', have thought proper to say one word upon the subject, in parliament or out of parliament. But the silence which in them is respectful and prudent, in me is disaffection. I shall say no more on this matter. The prince must have been strangely deceived. He is much more personally concerned, in all questions of *succession*, than the king, who is in possession. Yet his Majesty has received, with every mark of a gracious protection, my intended service to his family. The prince has been made to believe it to be some sort of injury to himself. Those, the most in his favour and confidence, are avowed admirers of the French democracy. Even his attorney and his solicitor-general,<sup>1</sup> who, by their legal knowledge and their eloquence as advocates, ought to be the pillars of his succession, are enthusiasts, public and declared, for the French revolution and its principles. These, my dear sir, are strange symptoms about a future court; and they make no small part of that fear of impending mischief to this constitution, which grows upon me every hour. A Prince of Wales with democratic law-servants, with democratic political friends, with democratic personal favourites! If this be not ominous to the crown, I know not what is.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Erskine, afterwards Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Piggott, afterwards Attorney-General.

As to the party and its interests, in endeavouring to support the legal hereditary succession of the Prince of Wales, I consider their power as included in the assertion of his right. I could not say positively how soon the ideas they entertained might have recommended them to the favour of the reigning king. I did not, however, conceive that, whatever their notions might be, the probability of their being called to the helm, was quite so great under his present Majesty as under a successor; and that, therefore, the maintenance of the right of that successor, against those who at once attacked the settlement of the crown, and were the known, declared enemies of the party, was, in a *political light*, the greatest service I could do to that party, and more particularly to Mr. Fox; infinitely more so than to the Duke of Portland, or Lord Fitzwilliam; because, for many reasons, I am satisfied, that these two noble persons are not so ill at St. James's as he is; and that they (or one of them at least) are not near so well at Carlton House as Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan.

According to the common principles of vulgar politics, this would be thought a service, not ill-intended, and aimed at its mark with tolerable discretion and judgement. For this, the gentlemen have thought proper to render me obnoxious to the party, odious to the prince, (from whose future prerogative alone my family can hope for anything,) and at least suspected by the body of my country. That is, they have endeavoured completely and fundamentally to ruin me and mine, in all the ways in which it is in the power of man to destroy the interests and objects of man, whether in his friendship, his fortunes, or his reputation.

But I thought there was another, and a more important point in view, in which, what I had done for the public might eminently serve the party, and in concerns of infinitely more importance to those who compose the major part of the body, than any share of power they might obtain. I considered the

party as the particular mark of that anarchical faction ; and that the principle of the French revolution which they preached up, would have *them* for its first and most grateful victims. It is against them, as a part of an aristocracy, that the nefarious principles of that grovelling rebellion and tyranny strike ; and not at monarchy, further than as it is supposed to be built upon an aristocratic basis. They, who would cheat the nobility and gentry of this nation to their ruin, talk of that monster of turpitude as nothing but the subversion of monarchy. Far from it. The French pride themselves on the idea, however absurd, that theirs is a *démocracie royale*. The name of the monarchy, and of the hereditary monarchy too, they preserve in France ; and they feed the person whom they call ' king ', with such a revenue, given to mere luxury and extravagance totally separated from all provision for the state, as I believe no people ever before dreamed of granting for such purposes. But against the nobility and gentry they have waged inexorable war. There are, at this day, no fewer than ten thousand heads of respectable families driven out of France ; and those who remain at home, remain in depression, penury, and continued alarm for their lives. You and I know that (in order, as I conceive, still to blind and delude the gentlemen of England.) the French faction here pretended that the persecution of the gentlemen of France could not last ;—that at the next election they would recover the consideration which belonged to them, and that we should see that country represented by its best blood, and by all its considerable property. They knew at the time that they were setting forward an imposture. The present assembly, the first born, the child of the strength of their constitution, demonstrates the value of their prediction. At the very instant in which they were making it, they knew, or they knew nothing, that the two hundred and fifty clubs which govern that country had settled their lists. They must have known that the gentlemen of France were not degraded and

branded in order to exalt them to greater consequence than ever they possessed. Such they would have had, if they were to compose the whole, or even the major part, of an assembly which rules, in everything legislative and executive, without any sort of balance or control. No such thing:—the assembly has not fifty men in it (I believe I am at the outside of the number) who are possessed of an hundred pounds a year, in any description of property whatsoever. About six individuals of enormous wealth, and thereby sworn enemies to the prejudice which affixes a dignity to virtuous well-born poverty, are in the number of the fifty. The rest are, what might be supposed, men whose names never were before heard of beyond their market-town. About four hundred of the seven are country practitioners of the law; several of them the stewards and men of business who managed the affairs of gentlemen, bishops, or convents; who, for their merits towards their former employers, are now made the disposers of their lives and fortunes. The rest no one can give an account of, except of those who have passed to this temple of honour, through the temple of virtue called the house of correction. When the king asked the president who the gentlemen were who attended him with a message, the president answered, that he did not know one of them even by name. The gentlemen of this faction here, I am well aware, attribute this to the perverseness of the gentlemen themselves, who would not offer themselves as candidates. That they did not offer themselves is very true; because they knew that they could appear at the primary assemblies only to be insulted, at best; perhaps even murdered, as some of them have been; and many more have been threatened with assassination. What are we to think of a constitution, as a pattern, from which the whole gentry of a country, instead of courting a share in it with eagerness and assiduity, fly as from a place of infection? But the gentlemen of France are all base, vicious, servile, &c. &c. &c. Pray, let not the gentlemen of England be

flattered to their destruction, by railing at their neighbours. They are as good as we are, to the full. If they were thus base and corrupt in their sentiments, there is nothing they would not submit to in order to have their share in this scramble for wealth and power. But they have declined it, from sentiments of honour and virtue, and the purest patriotism. One turns with pity and indignation from the view of what they suffer for those sentiments ; and, I must confess, my animosity is doubled against those amongst us, who, in that situation, can rail at persons who bear such things with fortitude, even supposing that they suffered for principles in which they were mistaken. But neither you, nor I, nor any fair man, can believe, that a whole nation is free from honour and real principle ; or that if these things exist in it, they are not to be found in the men the best born, and the best bred, and in those possessed of rank which raises them in their own esteem, and in the esteem of others, and possessed of hereditary settlement in the same place, which secures, with an hereditary wealth, an hereditary inspection. That these should be all scoundrels, and that the virtue, honour, and public spirit of a nation should be only found in its attorneys, pettifoggers, stewards of manors, discarded officers of police, shop-boys, clerks of counting-houses, and rustics from the plough, is a paradox, not of false ingenuity, but of envy and malignity. It is an error, not of the head, but of the heart. The whole man is turned upside down before such an inversion of all natural sentiment and all natural reason can take place. I do not wish to you, no, nor to those who applaud such scenes, angry as I am with them, masters of that description.

Visible as it was to the world, that not the despotism of a prince, but the condition of a gentleman, was the grand object of attack ; I thought I should do service to a party of gentlemen, to caution the public against giving countenance to a project, calculated for the ruin of such a party.

When such an attempt was not excused, even as well-intended, there was but one way of accounting for the conduct of gentlemen towards me ; it is, that from my hands they are resolved not to accept any service. Be it so. They are rid of an incumbrance ; and I retire to repose of body and mind, with a repose of conscience too ; perfect, with regard to the party and the public, however I may feel myself, as I do, faulty and deficient in other respects. The only concern I feel is, that I am obliged to continue an hour longer in parliament. Whilst I am there, except in some deep constitutional question, I shall take no part. Lord Fitzwilliam and the Duke of Portland shall not be seen voting one way in the House of Lords whilst I vote another in the House of Commons ; and any vote of mine, by which I may add even my mite of contribution towards supporting the system or advancing the power of the new French whigs, I never will give. That corruption has cast deep roots in that party, and they vegetate in it (however discredited amongst the people in general) every day with greater and greater force. The particular gentlemen who are seized with that malady (such I must consider it), have, to my thinking, so completely changed their minds, that one knows no longer what to depend upon, or upon what ground we stand. Some of them (besides the two leaders) are, indeed, so high in character, and of such great abilities, that their mistake, if such it be, must make a most mischievous impression. I know they say, that they do not want to introduce these things here, &c. &c.,—but this is a poor business, while they propagate all the abstract principles, and exalt to the stars the realization of them at our door. They are sublime metaphysicians ; and the horrible consequences produced by their speculations affect them not at all. They only ask, whether the proposition be true ?—Whether it produces good or evil, is no part of their concern. This long letter, my dear friend, is for you ; but so for you, as that you may show it to such of our

friends who, though they cannot in prudence support, will not in justice condemn me.

My dear sir,  
Most faithfully, your most obliged and  
obedient humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUN., ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, March, 1792.*

MY DEAREST RICHARD,

A thousand thanks for your letter to your uncle, which we mean to send this night to him on the circuit. I hope you have got the long letter and packet I wrote last. I shall not say much now, as I write chiefly to put you in mind of what perhaps you had forgot, that is, that you have a chaise lying useless to you and us at Holyhead; and that, if you mean to take any little trips in Ireland, surely in common sense you ought to send for it. An application to any of the captains will make them attend to it carefully. Hastings' business going off to the return of the judges. We are here; we came down yesterday. Miss Palmer, Mr. Gwatkin, and Mrs. Gwatkin, are just this minute arrived. I begin to think that these women look better already; they are to stay here for some time. Everything turned out fortunately for poor Sir Joshua, from the moment of his birth to the hour I saw him laid in the earth. Never was a funeral of ceremony attended with so much sincere concern of all sorts of people. The day was favourable; the order not broken or interrupted in the smallest degree. Your uncle, who was back in the procession, was struck almost motionless at his entering at the great west door. The body was just then entering the choir, and the organ began to open, and the long black train before him produced an astonishing effect on his sensibility, on considering how dear to him the object of that melancholy pomp

had been. Everything, I think, was just as our deceased friend would, if living, have wished it to be ; for he was, as you know, not altogether indifferent to this kind of observances. He gave, indeed, a direction that no expenses should be employed ; but his desire to be buried at St. Paul's justified what we have done ; and all circumstances demanded it. I don't think the whole charge will come up to six hundred pound. The academy bore their own share of the expense. We do not know his circumstances exactly, because we have not been able to estimate the immense collection of pictures, drawings, and prints. They stood him in more than twenty thousand pound. Taking things at the very worst, I do not think Miss Palmer can have less, when all legacies are discharged, than thirty thousand pound. It was owing, I believe, to his being obliged to take to his bed sooner than he expected, that poor Sir Joshua neglected even to name his nephews, the Palmers. This is the only unlucky thing. They are deeply hurt, and I do not much wonder at it.

It is plain that it is Hastings' plan to continue the trial until peers, commoners, and spectators, run away from it. Law<sup>1</sup> was three days in opening, but he spent more *hours* in those three days, than I had done in my four. Plumer<sup>2</sup> has spent three days in opening the Benares charge, and he has not got so far as Hastings' proposition to go up to Benares. He has already spent more hours than Fox and Grey did in going through the whole. If he proceeds on the same plan, and gives length in proportion to matter, I think he ought to take at least six days more. It is impossible to bring it to an end this session. In my opinion, they make very little way indeed ; though the doctrine, that no agreement barred against the rights of sovereignty, seemed to have made the impression intended by the counsel ; but that cannot last long before a discussion of the point.

My mind is much bent on you and on your business.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Ellenborough.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Solicitor-General.

You see by my letter how much I approve your plans. I take it for granted you have received it. I shall write to you more fully by a proper opportunity. If your clients relax for a moment, they are gone. Let the storm of addresses blow over. Let fury and treachery do their work. Reason and justice will prevail. Do they think, unfortunate and insane tyrants as they are, that slavery will be rendered more tolerable by adding contumely to it? Since the beginning of time, so outrageous a proceeding as that on the petition<sup>1</sup> has not been heard of. This shows that the petition ought to have been made reasoned and pathetic, that the treatment of it might have been rendered more striking. However, the Catholics were perfectly in the right to present one of some sort or other. They had been undone, past redemption, if they had suffered themselves to be intimidated from an application. The debate was wholly with them. Grattan's incomparable speech, I think, ought to make a little separate pamphlet. The debate ought to be put into the newspapers here. There is now sufficient vacancy for it. I have just read Jones's letter on this subject. I wish some things had been omitted, but it is as spirited and manly a performance as I think I have seen. The appearance of it, too, at this time is seasonable. Byrnes's Dublin publication of my letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe was so blundering as to vex me. He makes me say, and that at a critical point, the direct reverse of my sense. Debret brought it to me very luckily before he printed it, and I corrected the worst parts. I see, in his second edition, he too has chosen to amend it into a blunder; but it is a blunder of not much importance. He printed a large edition of two thousand; what is next I know not. I hear it is well spoken of by the opposition here. I think you quite right in all your schemes. What is that unfortunate man Lord Kenmare doing? He is worthily represented by Sir Boyle Roche. To make that ridiculous creature a peer, he sells three

<sup>1</sup> The petition of the Roman Catholic committee.

millions of his countrymen and brethren. Greater mischiefs happen often from folly, meanness, and vanity, than from the greater sins of avarice and ambition. All here salute you most cordially, and to God I commend you; wishing my best love to all friends in Dublin. Is the provost returned, and how are you there? I suppose Lord Charlemont is cold to you. How is the Duke of Leinster?

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUN., ESQ.

*March 23, 1792.*

MY DEAREST RICHARD,

We have received yours of the 17th, your baptismal day; which, according to laudable custom, you, I suppose, rebaptize in wine. Your mother observed, that it is the only one which you have dated.

The treachery of your old schoolfellow is something beyond the practice even of Irish secretaries, so recorded by Mr. Grattan. I can easily conceive that he who could betray, could overcharge. Indeed, a plain lie is better than such treason. You certainly are in the right not to suffer an incurable alienation between the Catholics and Dissenters. If the latter do, *bona fide*, resolve to relieve their country from this mass of absurd servitude, for so much they have merit, whatever their ulterior views may be. There are *few* things I wish more, (as I have said in the letters I have sketched to you,) than that the established churches should be continued on a firm foundation in both kingdoms. When I say *few*, I mean to be exact; for some things, assuredly, I have much nearer my heart, namely, the emancipation of that great body of my original countrymen, whom a jackanapes in lawn sleeves calls fools and knaves. I can never persuade myself that anything in our thirty-nine articles, which differs from their articles, is worth making three millions of people slaves, to secure its teaching at the public expense; and I think

he must be a strange man, a strange Christian, and a strange Englishman, who would not rather see Ireland a free, flourishing, happy *Catholic* country, though not *one* Protestant existed in it, than an enslaved, beggared, insulted, degraded Catholic country, as it is, with some Protestants here and there scattered through it, for the purpose, not of instructing the people, but of rendering them miserable. This I say, supposing that any security were derived from that abominable system. A religion that has for one of its dogmas the servitude of all mankind that do not belong to it, is a vile heresy; and this I think one of the worst heresies of that Protestant sect called Mahometanism.

It is a monstrous thing that the Catholics should be obliged to abjure a supposed claim to the property of others. Never was so absurd a charge made on men. I think they are in the right to abjure that claim; but they ought not to do it without a strong declaration of their indignation at its being, without the smallest foundation, imputed to them.

I return to the Dissenters. I am happy that you find those of Ireland not disaffected to this constitution in state; as to the Church, it is enough for its security, if they are not inflamed with a furious zeal for its destruction, and are content to let it stand as an institution of state for the satisfaction of some part of the people, but as a business in which they have no concern, as they and the Catholics most certainly have none. By the way, don't you think that, in the representation to the king, this business ought to be taken up in this way? I will send you a few dry heads, and you may see whether they accord with your ideas.

As to myself, my resolution about the part I should take, relative to the Dissenters, has been very wavering. I cannot a second time go to the question of the test, and not vote. This kind of thing cannot be repeated; but I really did wish to take some other opportunity to state their manifest designs and their conduct.

This affair of Birmingham, which frightened them at first, now fortifies them. They come forth as persecuted men. They all, as fast as they can meet, take up Priestley, and avowedly set him up as their head. They are preparing to renew the 14th of July. At Manchester they have advertised their thanks to Mr. Thomas Paine for his second work,—more infamous, if possible, than the first. They keep up their French correspondence as before. In short, the Unitarian Society, from whence all these things originate, are as zealous as their brethren at Constantinople; and, if care is not taken, I should think it very probable that you may live to see Christianity as effectually extirpated out of this country as it is out of France. I think I shall not meddle in these affairs at all. If I do, I shall certainly separate the sober and well-meaning, conscientious Dissenters, from the new French faction. Your mother has a cold, but otherwise, thank God, is well. Have you got my last long miscellaneous letter? Always say what you have got; or, if you are busy, desire Therry, or somebody else, to do it. Let everything be enclosed to Adey, whether from yourself or others. My last went, by your direction, to Mr. Lawless, and had only R. B., Esq., on the cover.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO LORD GRENVILLE

*Beaconsfield, August 18, 1792.*

I do not know whether I can perfectly justify myself in venturing to trouble your lordship, in my imperfect state of knowledge, with any suggestions of mine. But I trust, that however weak you may find my notions, you will believe that they are formed with general good intentions, and that they are laid before you with all possible respect to yourself and to your colleagues, and with real good wishes for whatever may contribute to your reputation in the conduct of the king's business.

The late shocking, though long expected, event at

Paris, has rendered, in my opinion, every step that shall be taken with regard to France, at this conjuncture, extremely delicate.

The part of a neutral power is, in itself, delicate ; but particularly so in a case in which it is impossible to suppose that, in this neutrality, there should not be some lurking wish in favour of one of the parties in the contest. The conduct of such a power will be looked up to with hope and fear during the contention. Everything which such a power says or does, will be construed by an application to the circumstances.

The present circumstances are an attack upon the King of France's palace ; the murder of all who were found in it ; the imprisonment of the king ; his suspension, stated by the faction itself as a deposition ; acts of violence which have obliged the majority of the national assembly to absent themselves from their functions ; add to these, the intention, not in the least ambiguous, of bringing the king and queen to a trial ; the resolution expressed by many of putting them to death, with or without that formality. The effect of these things, from their very nature, and from the nature of men, as well as from the principle on which they are done, at a time when theories are rashly formed, and readily pass from speculation into practice, and when ill examples, at all times apt to infect, are so unusually contagious, it is unnecessary for me to state to one of your lordship's sagacity and penetration.

This last revolution, whatever name it may assume, at present bears no one character of a national act. It is the act only of some desperate persons, inhabitants of one city only, instigating and hiring at an enormous expense the lowest of the people, to destroy the monarch and the monarchy, with whatever else is respectable in society. Not one officer of the national guards of Paris, which officers are composed of nothing higher than good tradesmen, has appeared in this business. It is not yet adopted throughout France by any one class of people. No regular govern-

ment of any country has yet an object with which they can decently treat in France, or to which they can rationally make any official declaration whatsoever.

In such a state of things, to address the present heads of the insurrection, put by them into the nominal administrative departments of state office, is to give a direct sanction to their authority on the part of the court of Great Britain. To this time, the King of France's name has appeared to every public act and instrument; and all office transactions to our court, and to every other foreign court, have appeared in their usual form. If we pleased, it was in our power to shut our eyes to everything else; but this is now no longer possible. I should, therefore, beg leave to submit it to consideration, whether to recognize the leaders in the late murderous insurrection, as the actual governors of France, is not, at best, a little premature. Perhaps it may be a doubt, as a matter of sound policy, whether more would not be lost by this hasty recognition on the side of the great, settled, and acknowledged powers, than we can hope to gain by pressing to pay our court to this, at best, unformed and embryo potentate. I take it for granted, that it will not be easy for Lord Gower<sup>1</sup> to continue in his present situation. If it were even thought for the dignity of this crown, no man of honour and spirit would submit to it. It is a sacrifice too great to be made, of all generous and noble feeling. I should humbly propose it for consideration, whether, on his retreat, great reserve ought not to be used with regard to *any declaration*. If any person standing in the place of a minister should apply to him for an explanation, he ought, in my poor opinion, to be *absolutely silent*. But if that should not be thought the best course, he might say that he had had leave to return on his private affairs. The King of Spain has no minister at Paris, yet his neutrality has hitherto been complete. The neutrality of this court has already

<sup>1</sup> At this time Ambassador at Paris from the court of London.

been more than once declared. *At this moment*, any over-prompt and affected new declaration on that subject, made to the persons who have lately vaulted into the seat of government, after committing so many atrocious acts and threatening more, would have all *the force and effect of a declaration in their favour*. Although it should be covered with mollifying expressions with regard to the king's personal safety, (which will be considered as nothing but a sacrifice to decorum and ceremony, and as mere words of course,) it will appear to the Jacobin faction as *a direct recommendation to their meditated act of regicide*; knowing, as the world does, their dispositions, their menaces, their preparations, and the whole train of the existing circumstances. In that case, to say, 'I hope you mean no ill, and I recommend it to you to do no ill, but do what you please, you have nothing to fear from me,' would be plainly to call upon them to proceed to any lengths their wickedness might carry them.

It is a great doubt with me, whether a declaration to this new power, a creature almost literally of yesterday, and a creature of treasonable and murderous riot of the lowest people in one city, is not a substantial breach of the neutrality promised to the power to whom originally the neutrality was assured, on the interposition of *foreign* powers; namely, to the most Christian king. To take the first opportunity, with the most extraordinary haste, to remove all fears from the minds of his assassins, is tantamount to taking a part against him. Much I fear, that though nothing could be more remote from the intention of this court, yet if such a declaration were made, and if the act of atrocity apprehended should actually take place, we shall be considered as ready accomplices in it, and *a sort of accessories before the fact*; particularly when no declaration on the part of our court has been called for by the new power, and that, as yet, they have no minister at this court. If the step of the recall of our minister (supposing such a step in contemplation) should produce any

fears in them, I see no use in removing those fears. On our part, the navy of France is not so formidable that I think we have any just ground of apprehension that she will make war upon us. It is not the enmity, but the friendship of France that is truly terrible. Her intercourse, her example, the spread of her doctrines, are the most dreadful of her arms.

I do not see what a nation loses in reputation or in safety, by keeping its conduct in its own power. I think such a state of freedom in the use of a moral and political reserve in such unheard-of circumstances, can be well justified to any sovereign abroad, or to any person or party at home. I perceive that much pains are taken by the Jacobins of England to propagate a notion, that one state has not a right to interfere according to its discretion in the interior affairs of another. This strange notion can only be supported by a confusion of ideas, and by not distinguishing the case of rebellion and sedition in a neighbouring country, and taking a part in the divisions of a country when they do prevail, and are actually formed. In the first case there is undoubtedly more difficulty than in the second, in which there is clearly no difficulty at all. To interfere in such dissensions requires great prudence and circumspection, and a serious attention to justice, and to the policy of one's own country, as well as to that of Europe. But an abstract principle of public law, forbidding such interference, is not supported by the reason of that law, nor by the authorities on the subject, nor by the practice of this kingdom, nor by that of any civilized nation in the world. This nation owes its laws and liberties, His Majesty owes the throne on which he sits, to the contrary principle. The several treaties of guarantee to the Protestant succession more than once reclaimed, affirm the principle of interference, which in a manner forms the basis of the public law in Europe. A more mischievous idea cannot exist, than that any degree of wickedness, violence, and oppression, may prevail in a country, that the most abominable, murderous,

and exterminating rebellions may rage in it, or the most atrocious and bloody tyranny may domineer, and that no neighbouring power can take cognizance of either, or afford succour to the miserable sufferers.

I trust your lordship will have the goodness to excuse the freedom taken by an old Member of Parliament. The habits of the House of Commons teach a liberty, perhaps improper, with regard to office. But be assured, there is nothing in mine that has the smallest mixture of hostility; and it will, I trust, appear that my motives are candid and friendly, if ever this affair should come into discussion in the House of Commons, and I should feel myself called on to deliver my opinions. If I were, as formerly I have been, in systematic opposition, (most assuredly I am not so now,) I had much rather, according to my practice in more instances than one, respectfully to state a doubt to ministers whilst a measure is depending, than to reproach them afterwards with its consequences in my place. What I write will, I hope, at worst, be thought the intrusion of an importunate friend. I am thoroughly convinced that the faction of the English Jacobins, though a little under a cloud for the present, is neither destroyed nor disheartened. The fire is still alive under the ashes. Every encouragement, direct or indirect, given to their brethren in France, stirs and animates the embers. So sure as we have an existence, if these things should go on in France, as go on they may, so sure it is, that in the ripeness of their time, the same tragedies will be acted in England. Carra, and Condorcet, and Santerre, and Manuel, and Pétion, and their brethren the Priestleys, the Coopers, and the Watts—the deputies of the body of the dissenters and others at Manchester, who embraced Carra in the midst of the Jacobin club;—the revolution-society that received Pétion in London;—the whole race of the *affiliated*, who are numerous and powerful, whose principles, dispositions, and wishes are the very same, are as closely connected as ever; and they do not fail to mark and to use everything

that shows a remissness, or any equivocal appearance in government, to their advantage. I conceive that the Duke of Brunswick is as much fighting the battle of the Crown of England, as the Duke of Cumberland did at Culloden. I conceive that any unnecessary declarations on our part will be to him, and to those who are disposed to put a bound to the empire of anarchy and assassination, a signal discouragement. The cause of my dread, and perhaps over-officious anxiety, at this time, has arisen from what (you will have the goodness to pardon me) I thought *rather too much readiness to declare on other occasions*. Perhaps I talk of a thing not at all in contemplation. If no thoughts of the kind have been entertained, your lordship will be pleased to consider this as waste paper. It is, at any rate, but as a hint to yourself, and requires no answer.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.,  
EDM. BURKE.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE  
RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO MR. WILLIAM BURKE  
IN INDIA

*September, 1792.*

. . . This is the politics of the little neighbourhood. I will now say a word to the politics of the great neighbourhood. Last winter produced extraordinary phenomena. In my opinion, as long as the desperate system which prevails in France can maintain itself, we shall always find some eruption or other here. The fire is constantly at work; it sometimes blazes out. It is sometimes smothered, or rather covered, by the ashes;—but there it is, and there it will be. The whole edifice of ancient Europe is shaken by the earthquake caused by the fire. One part of the building only is level with the ground; but all is impaired very considerably. For my part, I think that even in the efforts made by princes to re-establish

the ancient order of things, signs of great weakness, and even of those causes which they are leagued to prevent, are very discernible. But the complete security of many people here, I hold to be amongst the most alarming of the symptoms of our present distemper. Last winter they were roused from this security, but only to fall into it again. The remedies they used left the distemper where it was, but it has increased the security, which is the most dangerous effect of it. The association for parliamentary reform, which is composed of amateurs of the French revolution, and certainly had the spirit of that revolution for its vital principle, and, in most of the members, for its ultimate object, gave a very great and serious alarm, not most or first to the ministers, (though to them a good deal too,) but to the older and weighty party of the opposition, who saw, upon that occasion, the necessity of strengthening the hands of government. They came to an understanding, and thence into a degree of concert with administration. Many things were proposed, but both parties seemed to agree but in one (and, indeed, no more was much pressed); that is, in the address of the two Houses, to be supported by mutual concurrence of the principal of both parties. Fox was put into great straits. The young, and vigorous, and enterprising of his party had led in that business. The weighty, grave, important, the men of settled character and influence, were strongly against it. In this situation you may believe he found himself embarrassed and mortified. Though he had done all in his power to excite the spirit from whence that association had its rise, the measure did not originate from his advice, nor was it carried on from any active encouragement of his. However, when the affair came to the test, he showed which division in the party he thought it the most for his purpose, or the most agreeable to his inclination, to adhere to. He fell foul on the address, though he well knew that it did in effect begin from the Duke of Portland, and that the draft had been laid before

him, and settled in a manner agreeable to his ideas. All this, however, produced no rupture between the duke and him, though on his part great vexation. All this agreement concerning the safety of the fundamental part of the Constitution, naturally produced approximation towards each other, of the ministry, and one part of the leaders of opposition. A sort of negotiation between Lord Loughborough and Dundas was commenced with the approbation of the Duke of Portland, for a comprehension of parties, and putting the administration on a broader and, as they think, a safer bottom. The ministers say, that they think they are full strong enough for the support of their own power and situation, and that they are not the less strong for getting rid of the Chancellor<sup>1</sup>; but they confess they are not strong enough for the public purposes of administration, and for the steps which the exigencies of the time may require. These exigencies can be only the changes brought about in Europe by the situation of France; but I do not find that *these* are any part of the object in view by either of the parties, which makes me (who conceive, and indeed am quite sure, that all other politics are absorbed and drawn into that one gulf,) very indifferent about the final result of this negotiation; I say *final result*, because, though it seems as if it were broken off, I do not think it is so, conclusively. The difficulty, in fact, is the arrangement of Fox, and that difficulty is greatly increased by the strange conduct held by the Duke of Portland, who, in proposing the arrangement to Fox, never made the political principle upon which that arrangement was to be made, any part, much less the fundamental part, of the negotiation. In truth, I do not see how the duke should think of coming into office, or desiring his friends to do so, unless there was something in the circumstances of the moment sufficiently urgent to justify a departure from systematic opposition. This could be *nothing* but the necessity of strengthening the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Thurlow.

monarchy against the principles of French republicanism ; but Fox, upon whom the duke turned the whole negotiation, without the least reference to any political principle, saw plainly that he could not be arranged in a manner suitable to the rank in which undoubtedly he stands. To abandon all the young and energetic part of the party, and the whole body of the dissenters, upon whom he has lately built his principal hopes, is what would be difficult for him to do. He, therefore, made a point of what he knew Lord Loughborough would not dare even to mention to Pitt, that Mr. Pitt's abdication of the Treasury should be a *sine qua non* in the negotiation ; and he prevailed on the Duke of Portland on his part to make an abdication of his pretensions to that situation, to neutralize the office that generally goes with that of first minister ; that is, to put it into the hands of the Marquis of Bath (Lord Weymouth), or the Duke of Leeds. This would, in effect, completely set aside the Duke of Portland for ever, and put up the Treasury in hands avowedly holding it only in interim and ineffectually, to be fought for as a prize by court intrigue or parliamentary conflict between him and Pitt. Into this trap the duke has given. Fox will not arrange on other terms, and the duke does not think it advisable to arrange without Fox. You see, that if Pitt did choose to give up his post, of which he is in possession, to game for the chance of it afterwards, how much this arrangement, made to produce peace and settlement, must lead to eternal confusion ;—you see plainly enough. I do not know anything more likely, in the present crisis of politics, to ruin the tranquillity, and, with it, to endanger the safety of the kingdom. As to Pitt, I believe the idea can be no secret to him. But nothing was proposed by Lord Loughborough the negotiator, but to place him generally in a Cabinet office. Pitt did not directly put a negative on it, but said the idea was new to him ;—that he felt the importance of Fox's abilities in the support of government ;—that he had no sort

of personal animosity to him, but rather, personally, good will and good liking; but that, from the part he had taken through the whole session, and particularly on the proclamation, he did not see how he could be recommended to the king's confidence, at least without some further explanations. The ministers, after this, made no attempt to renew the negotiation. You see that the duke is more and more in Fox's power,—indeed, is now delivered over to him, bound hand and foot; and must be so, until he puts his conduct upon some distinct principle, on which an issue between them may be fairly joined. You may easily conceive that this negotiation, totally destitute of all foundation in political principle, was not, at least in the mode and terms, of my advising. I saw the mischief of any arrangement which should make Fox desperate, and put him, in the most desperate manner, at the head of the worst, designing men, as well as the duke or any one else could do. But my advice was, that, as a foundation of the whole, the political principle must be settled as the preliminary;—namely, 'a total hostility to the French system at home and abroad'; that this ought to be put as a test to Fox, on which, if he gave security by declaration and conduct, he would be, if so, separated from the factions, and lose their confidence; and then, whether he came in or not, the duke would preserve consistency, character, and dignity, by adhering to him, and making his power an object in all his manœuvres, whether of opposition or negotiation. If he refused this test, grounded on the sole motive of a coalition of parties, he would leave the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam, and all the sound part of their friends, at liberty to take such steps as they pleased for the public benefit; and thus, by an increase of reputation, they would gain more in the nation than they lost in a faction that does not belong to them; and though, without question, that faction would continue to fight, with Fox and Sheridan at their head, yet, when it was clearly known what they

fought for, and on what they divided with their old friends, they would fight at every kind of disadvantage;—but things have taken another turn. The Duke of Portland does not dare to propose a test to Fox, and Lord Loughborough did not dare to propose an abdication of the Treasury to Pitt. The thing that encourages Fox to take the steps, and to make the demands he does, is a persuasion he cannot part with, that is, that the king is grown quite weary of Pitt; that he is intolerable to His Majesty, and that, in that humour, he has no objection at all to him, Fox. I have no doubt that he is confirmed in those sentiments by the ex-Chancellor; but I am sure that they both either deceive themselves wholly, or, at least, greatly exaggerate the grounds of their hope.

So far as to this. To your Indian interests I have little to say. I rejoice in the conclusion of the war. I rejoice in the glory which Lord Cornwallis has acquired in the war, and in its termination; I wish only that you had some share in the advantage of it, which you do not hint at, and I believe is not the case. Lord Guildford, and I believe with ground, is reported to be the successor of Lord Cornwallis. I believe he may have it if he pleases. You may be sure, if that should prove as it is supposed, you will not be neglected. What do you say to the Duke of Portland's being Chancellor to the University of Oxford? It was not originally proposed by ministers, but it was countenanced by them. Character had the chief operation. He is vastly pleased. The Duke of Beaufort was the other candidate, but he has given up his pretensions. The Duke of Portland was offered the blue ribbon, but he has declined it. He is vastly pleased with the other. . . .

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUN., ESQ.

*Beaconsfield, Sunday, September 9, 1792.*

MY DEAREST RICHARD,

The horrid scenes which succeed each other with such dreadful rapidity, hardly leave one ease enough of heart or clearness of head to put down anything, even of our own affairs, on paper to you with any tolerable coherence. However, amidst these horrors, and after reading the abominable palliation of these horrors in our abominable newspaper, as my morning's treat, I am first to bless God that I have not the greatest of all possible domestic afflictions to add to the effects of those public calamities on our minds. Your mother, I bless God, grows stronger and stronger.

Your uncle proposes to meet us at Bath. Thence he will go to Weymouth. The Duke of Portland is well of his accident, which had near been fatal. We thank you heartily for your early letter from Dublin, which we received yesterday morning. Thank God for your good passage. We were a little uneasy from the steady prevalence of winds in the westerly quarter, which were besides, at times, very boisterous. I have no doubt that the Herculean faction, whose manœuvres you speak of, will find the grand juries as ready an organ of their politics as they did the House of Commons. The Catholics complain of the oppression of these grand juries. The grand juries declare they wish to continue the power of oppression;—who doubts them? As to you, my dear Richard, be assured, that in private conversations, in an affair of this difficulty and extent, you can do nothing. Reserve and coolness, and unwillingness to begin or continue discourses on this subject, and not too great a quickness to hear, will give the enemy a better opinion of your discretion, and make them respect you the more. Besides, by leaving them to themselves, they will be less heated with controversy, and disposed to think more dispassionately upon the

subject. Your mind you will open to your confidential friends in the committee,—there it is necessary; and that restraint which is prudence with enemies, is treachery with friends. What degree of temperate and steady firmness you may find amongst them, I know not. But everything will depend upon that combination,—that is, the combination of perseverance with coolness, and *great choice* in measures. You cannot too often inculcate to your chief friends, that this affair is of such a nature, that it cannot possibly be the work of a single day, or of a single act. The web has been too long weaving to be unravelled in an instant. No evils, but much good would happen, if it were so unravelled. But that is hardly to be expected without some event which we cannot produce, and would not produce if we could;—such as the American war and its issue, which brought on ideas of Irish independence, and these again the necessity of conciliating the Catholics. This hastened their relief to the point in which it stands by many years. The petition to the king I hold an essential *preliminary*; for any further application to Parliament, (whither, to be sure, you must come at last,) until the mind of Government and the public in both kingdoms is better prepared than now it is, is to throw away prematurely your last resource. It is a jest to apply to the House of Commons. It would only subject the people to a renewal of the former outrages, and harden the enemy in his oppressive temper and principle. As to the rest, for God's sake, when you see any of the Castle people, oppose a little prudent dissimulation to their fraud. There is no danger that you will carry it too far. As to your own friends, you will soon see how they are disposed to the petition, and to a series of *connected* measures. A fire, and away, will never do. But whatever their dispositions may be, do not you press anything upon them beyond their power of bearing it; and above all, do not form any sort of rash resolution, let their behaviour be what it will. Nothing but temper can keep them or

you together, or conduct this long business to a desirable end. Don't think this advice to come from an opinion you are likely to fail in this point. Your temper and self-command, thank God, are much better than mine are, or ever have been. I say nothing of the affairs of France, though they are never a moment absent from my mind. Oh God! They do not suffer anything else to occupy it. What scenes! And what will be the end of them? All agree that they have not, probably, murdered fewer than seven thousand in this last massacre. As for that admirable and heroic clergy, who had devoted themselves to the fury of their robbers;—that order begins to fly hither in great numbers every day. The Bishop of St. Pol supports them to a miracle by his exertions. A general subscription is become necessary, and I flatter myself it will do. I have put down but twenty; but Metcalf, who was here, generously put his name down for a hundred; Col. Ironside for fifty; Lord Inchiquin twenty; and our good parsonage, five guineas. So the bishop has got, by his visit here, nearly two hundred. We have already about five hundred and sixty mouths to maintain. It is plain that the abandoned gang in France put their whole trust in the pledge in their hands, and draw out for murder a certain number of victims proportioned to the advances of the Duke of Brunswick; and here, the infernal faction applaud their policy. We are going to set off with the promise of a reasonable April day. God bless and preserve you now and ever!

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO THE COMTE  
DE MERCY

*August, 1793.*

SIR,

I am infinitely obliged to your Excellency for your generous intentions with regard to my young relation, Nagle. Whenever he comes to possess enough of the French or German languages to be fit to be presented to your Excellency, he will solicit that honour, if his

military destination should permit him to profit of your condescension and goodness. General Count Dalton has been so very kind as to give him his first commission in his own regiment. I hope that, in course of time, your Excellency's powerful protection, and his own good behaviour, in endeavouring to merit the enviable distinction, will ensure his future advancement. It is a thing about which I am anxious, as I am much deceived if he is not a good lad.

I shall always recollect, with the highest satisfaction, the morning which you did me the honour to spend at my house ; and if it has given anything like a favourable impression of me and my intentions to one of your Excellency's judgement, experience, and knowledge of men and affairs, I shall remember it with as much pride as gratitude. If anything in my conversation has merited your regard, I think it must be the openness and freedom with which I commonly express my sentiments. You are too wise a man not to know that such freedom is not without its use ; and that by encouraging it, men of true ability are enabled to profit by hints thrown out by understandings much inferior to their own, and which they who first produce them are, by themselves, unable to turn to the best account. I am sure there is one circumstance which will induce your Excellency to forgive the freedom that I used formerly, or that I may now use ; it is the perfect deference with which everything I suggest is submitted to your judgement.

I flatter myself, too, that you are pleased with my zeal in this cause. I certainly look upon it to be the cause of humanity itself. I perfectly concur with you in that opinion, provided I understand, as I trust I do, the true object of the war. I do not exclude from amongst the just objects of such a confederacy as the present, the ordinary securities which nations must take against their mutual ambition, let their internal constitutions be of what nature they will. But the present evil of our time, though in a great measure an evil of ambition, is not one of common

political ambition, but in many respects entirely different. It is not the cause of nation as against nation ; but, as you will observe, the cause of mankind against those who have projected the subversion of that order of things, under which our part of the world has so long flourished, and indeed, been in a progressive state of improvement ; the limits of which, if it had not been thus rudely stopped, it would not have been easy for the imagination to fix. If I conceive rightly of the spirit of the present combination, it is not at war with France, but with Jacobinism. They cannot think it right, that a second kingdom should be struck out of the system of Europe, either by destroying its independence, or by suffering it to have such a *form* in its independence, as to keep it, as a perpetual fund of revolutions, in the very centre of Europe, in that region which alone touches almost every other, and must influence, even where she does not come in contact. As long as Jacobinism subsists there, in any form, or under any modification, it is not, in my opinion, the gaining a fortified place or two, more or less, or the annexing to the dominion of the allied powers this or that territorial district, that can save Europe, or any of its members. We are at war with a *principle*, and with an example, which there is no shutting out by fortresses, or excluding by territorial limits. No lines of demarcation can bound the Jacobin empire. It must be extirpated in the place of its origin, or it will not be confined to that place. In the whole circle of military arrangements and of political expedients, I fear that there cannot be found any sort of *merely defensive plan* of the least force, against the effect of the *example* which has been given in France. That *example* has shown, for the first time in the history of the world, that it is very possible to subvert the whole frame and order of the best constructed states, by corrupting the common people with the spoil of the superior classes. It is by that instrument that the French orators have accomplished their purpose, to the ruin of France ;

and it is by that instrument that, if they can establish themselves in France, (however broken or curtailed by themselves or others,) sooner or later, they will subvert every government in Europe. The effect of *erroneous doctrines* may be soon done away; but the example of *successful pillage* is of a nature more permanent, more applicable to use, and a thing which speaks more forcibly to the interests and passions of the corrupt and unthinking part of mankind, than a thousand theories. Nothing can weaken the lesson contained in that example, but to make as strong an example on the other side. The leaders in France must be made to feel, in order that all the rest there, and in other countries, may be made to see that such spoil is no sure possession. It will be proper to let the leaders of such factions know that when they shake the property of others, they can never convert their spoil into property in their own favour; either in the specific object of their robbery, or in any representative which they may choose to give it. The people at large, in all countries, ought to be made sensible, that the symbols of public robbery never can have the sanction and the currency that belong exclusively to the symbols of public faith. If any government should be settled in France, upon any other idea than that of the faithful restitution of all property of all descriptions, and that of the rigorous and exemplary punishment of the principal authors and contrivers of its ruin, I am convinced to a certainty, that property, and along with property, government, must fall in every other state in Europe, in the same manner in which they have both fallen in France. I am convinced that twenty years would be too long a period to fix for such an event, under the operation of such causes as are now at work. As to France itself, no form of government which human wit can contrive, or human force compel, can have a longer duration there than those miserable tottering constitutions, which have been erected on false foundations, for those four years past have had;

because the new, or the restoration of the old government, will be deprived of that solid foundation which connects property with the safety of the state. If the old proprietors (of whatever name) be not restored, an immense mass of possession will be thrown into hands who have been enriched by the subversion of the monarchy, and who never can be trusted for its support. Nothing, I am persuaded, can be done, with the smallest prospect of permanence, but by completely counteracting all those crude systems with which mankind have been surfeited; and by putting everything, without exception, as nearly as possible, upon its former basis. When this, (the short and simple method,) for which we have no need to have recourse to abstruse philosophy or intricate politics, is done, we may then talk with safety upon some practical principles of reforming what may be amiss; with the comfortable assurance to honest, who are the only wise men, that if they should not be able to make any reformation whatsoever in the ancient order of things, the worst abuses which ever attended it would be ten thousand times better for the people than all the boasted reforms in the scheme of innovation.

It is very fortunate for those who may have the happiness of contributing to the settlement of France, (in which your Excellency may have a share, which I envy you), that the fraudulent currency founded upon this robbery has, of itself, sunk so very low, as to leave but one, and that a very short step, to its utter annihilation. The utter destruction of assignats, and the restoration of order in Europe, are one and the same thing. A reasonable public credit, and some retribution to those who have suffered by its destruction, may be hoped for, when this immense mass of fraud and violence, which has usurped its place, is totally destroyed, so as not to leave the slightest trace of its ever having existed.

It is the contempt of property, and the setting up against its principle certain pretended advantages of the State, (which, by the way, exists only for its

conservation,) that has led to all the other evils which have ruined France, and brought all Europe into the most imminent danger. The beginning of the whole mischief was a false idea that there is a difference in property, according to the description of the persons who held it under the laws; and that the despoiling a minister of religion, is not the same robbery with the pillage of other men. They who, through weakness, gave way to the ill-designs of bad men in that confiscation, were not long before they practically found their error. The spoil of the royal domain soon followed the seizure of the estates of the church. The *appanages* of the king's brothers immediately came on the heels of the usurpation of the royal domain; the property of the nobility survived but a short time the *appanages* of the princes of the blood-royal. At length the moneyed and the movable property tumbled on the ruin of the immovable property;—and at this day, no magazine, from the warehouses of the East India Company to the grocer's and the baker's shop, possesses the smallest degree of safety. I am perfectly persuaded that there does not exist the smallest chance, under the most favourable issue of military operations, of restoring monarchy, order, law, and religion, in France, but by doing justice, under wise regulations, to those ecclesiastics who have been robbed of their estates by the most wicked and the most foolish of all men;—by those who took the lead in the constituent assembly.

In this opinion, give me leave to assure your Excellency, I am far from single. It is the decided sense of all thinking men, who are well-affected to the cause of order in this country. The necessity of providing for such ecclesiastics as are in the British dominions, has often led the conversation to that subject. We have had opportunities of knowing and considering them in all points of view; and if their re-establishment were not a valid claim of justice, yet their personal merits, and the rules of sound policy, would strongly recommend it. We did not believe,

before we had an opportunity of seeing it realized before our eyes, that, in such a multitude of men, so much real virtue had existed in the world. We are convinced, that a number of persons so disposed, and so qualified as they are, if restored to their country, their property, and the influence which property in good hands carries with it, would be a necessary supplement to the use of arms; and that under a wise administration, they might do great things indeed for restoring France to the civilized world. Without this help, such a deplorable havoc is made in the minds of men (both sexes) in France, still more than in the external order of things, and the evil is so great and spreading, that a remedy is impossible on any other terms.

Perhaps to a mind formed like that of your Excellency to give a preference to that kind of policy which is most connected with generosity, honour, and justice, the opinions of people in England ought to have some weight; partly, that we cannot be supposed influenced in this point by the spirit of sect; and partly, because we may be supposed to have made a sort of equitable purchase of a right to a voice in their affairs. The maintenance of these worthy and meritorious persons, scanty as it is for each individual, has already cost us upwards of seventy thousand pounds sterling. Unfortunately, this kind of resource cannot continue long. Surely it is as reasonable that they should be maintained from their own property, as from yours, or from our English charity.

It is with a real satisfaction, and which highly enhances the pleasure we feel from the glory of your arms, that you have gone before me in the restitution of some kinds of property in Condé and Valenciennes. If Providence should so far favour the allied arms, that the whole of the French Netherlands should be reduced, the restitution of all kinds of ecclesiastical estates would form a very essential resource for many that are upon your and upon our hands.

Since I have taken the liberty of troubling you so far, you will excuse me if, once for all, I trespass a little longer on your generous indulgence. There is matter essential enough to justify a good deal of discourse. I shall, however, touch only on a very few heads, which I leave entirely to your Excellency's more mature consideration.

It is a thing singular in our age, and, I believe, without example in any, that in so large and important a part of Europe as France, no person, and no body politic whatsoever, is recognized in the character of its lawful government, or as representing that government. It is not necessary to point out to one of your sagacity, the fatal consequences of this state of things, and its effect upon the reputation of the great powers engaged in this war. These powers appear, with regard to France, in no other way than in the light of an enemy to the nation universally; and not, as when they made the declaration of last summer, as the enemy only of a pernicious faction tyrannizing in that country; a light in which no belligerent power ever did appear, if he could possibly avoid it. Indeed, not to recognize the government in the legal successor to the monarchy, is *virtually to acknowledge the usurpation*, and to justify the murder, or, what is worse than the murder, the deposition and pretended trial of the king. I am afraid, too, that it is a principal cause of the dreadful treatment of the now king, and particularly that of the queen, whose situation, grief, horror, and indignation, leave me no power of describing; nor is it necessary to any one, much less to you. Several of the most sensible and dispassionate observers are astonished at this procedure. They are astonished at the situation of the brothers of the late king,—two mild and benevolent princes, and worthy of a better destiny. They feel the same as to the nobility of France, who have comported themselves so as to merit the esteem and respect of all honourable and feeling minds. It is wonderful that, amongst such a vast multitude of gentlemen as we have seen here, some of

them, too, very young, and who have not had time to have their principles confirmed, not one of them, notwithstanding the pressure of very urgent circumstances, has been known to do a single low and unworthy action. These, as far as we know, are treated, some with more, some with less attention. The persons are more considered than the cause ; none are taken up as our natural allies, and as sufferers in a cause which we have in common. They are treated just as fugitives or exiles in an ordinary local and domestic dispute, in which there is no general concern. This, in my opinion, both with regard to the princes, and the crown party in France, is a dangerous mistake. The late king fell, because the rebels thought that in him they should be able to extinguish the monarchy, as they conceived that the regards of other powers were personal only, and not political. To say the truth, appearances seem too much to favour that opinion. They are, therefore, encouraged to take every step, which their malice, baseness, and wicked policy can suggest, with the queen, and those precious parts of the royal family which are in their hands. As to those abroad, they conceive that no interest is taken in them ; and that the sole objects of any sort of care are those whom they may treat as they please. They would cease to heap indignities on those personages, and hourly to threaten them with death, if they saw that the monarchy was treated as existing in all, who, by the laws and by proximity of blood, had an interest in it. The monarchy must exist somewhere in act and representation ; but the throne cannot be represented by a prison. Its virtue and operation must be where it can act and appear, if not with suitable dignity, at least with freedom. Monsieur is, by the reason and necessity of the case, (stronger than all law,) regent of that kingdom. If I were to speak my wishes, and what would perhaps be best, if France were any way settled, the queen would be regent. What is there to prevent it, if that event, which cannot be brought about but by the great powers,

(I mean the settlement of France,) should take place ? In the meantime, the monarchy, as well as the monarch, ought not to be reputed to be imprisoned in the Conciergerie, and all the states of the kingdom to suffer a total eclipse.

It is to the Emperor that the world looks for protection of the cause of all government, in the protection of the monarchy of France. His personal virtues, his rank in Europe, his relation to the queen-dowager and the young king, make him the fittest to authorize this arrangement provisionally. No person can now, or hereafter, hope to be regent, or anything else, against his will. The French monarchy, if it ever can be restored, languishing, feeble, and tottering, with an infant king, and a convalescent royalty, will, for a long time, be rather an object of protection than of jealousy, in any of its magistracies, to the Emperor, or to any foreign power.

Excuse, sir, this long letter. My mind has for some time suffered too much anxiety and agitation to enable me properly to compress and digest my thoughts. I cannot see the dignity of a great kingdom, and, with its dignity, all its virtue, imprisoned or exiled, without great pain. I cannot help making their case my own, and that of my friends who adhere to the same cause ; and whilst I feel my share in the common gratitude of Europe to His Imperial Majesty, to his ministers and his generals, for the security which, for the time, we enjoy like the rest of mankind, I look for the most of future service to the same quarter from whence we have received most for the time past.

Be pleased, sir, to do me the honour to accept my assurances of the most respectful attachment, and believe me,

Sir, your Excellency's most obedient  
and faithful humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO RICHARD  
BURKE, JUN., ESQ.

January 10, 1794.

MY DEAREST RICHARD,

In this calamitous time, I cannot tell what ought to be credited or not. Everything the least credible, and the least desirable, bids the fairest to be true. If you should see King, ask him whether the Royalists are, or are not, now in force at Noirmontier? Or, if he does not know, whether they have ever sent a cutter to try? Because if they are not all there, succours may be sent them in provision, ammunition, &c. by that way, as by any other. Is it wholly impossible that Grandelos may have been sent with false intelligence, as to the strength of the enemy at Cancale,<sup>1</sup> &c.? Have they consulted the Bishop of St. Pol, or any other Breton, with regard to any other place more to the westward of St. Malo, in that province? But they are not in earnest. By accident have you seen Sérent?

As to our home politics, I can very easily believe, on putting all things together, that Fox, with much blame of the war, its principle, and its conduct, may agree to another kind of support of it than he has hitherto given, and more approaching to the system of the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam. He may be even disposed to a coalition. He sees that the body of his party is melting away very fast; and that, in a little time, nothing will remain to him but a handful of violent people. I take it for granted he will come to the *moderates*, and by thus reuniting the party, put himself into a condition to negotiate with advantage, or to oppose with more credit and effect. Who the *mountain* are which he is to quit, I cannot conceive. I considered him as the mountain, and the others as only hillocks, or rather mice, that he had been brought to bed of. He never will break with Sheridan;—but I can easily believe that Sheridan

<sup>1</sup> On the northern coast of Bretagne, near St. Malo.

and all the rest are sickened by the cutting off their friend Egalité, Brissot, and the company of their patriotic friends and correspondents. They have no longer any link by which they can connect themselves with France; they will of course endeavour to piece up their own broken connexions in England. If they can do this, their first end will be obtained, and they will take the chances of things for further connexions. It is through the Duke of Portland they will work directly, and not through me. I am perfectly persuaded, that the last thing in the world which Fox will do, is to endeavour to reconcile himself to me. If he should, I confess I should feel myself in a very awkward situation. But I do not apprehend any such thing.

Your uncle has had two very good nights. Your mother is reasonably well, I bless God. May He ever bless and protect you. Adieu! Adieu!

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO EMPEROR  
WOODFORD, ESQ.

*January 13, 1794.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I do not know exactly in what light I am to consider the extent of a letter which you have shown me. I do not even know that Mr. Fox wishes it to be communicated to me as a paper containing his ideas. Indeed, it is not very material whether he does or no, for it says very little. It is short, dry, general, reserved; and from these causes, I think, rather obscure. It is, however, far from my disposition to repel anything which might even remotely lead to an agreement,—especially with a man of Mr. Fox's great importance,—at a time which, God knows, would make the concurrence of abilities, and an authority of infinitely less consequence than his, an object to be sought with the utmost earnestness.

Supposing the paper, then, to come from some person who is well acquainted with Mr. Fox's present

opinions and resolutions, I, who have no reserves, make no scruple at all in telling you how it appears to me.

I see nothing very distinct in it, except that Mr. Fox has not altered his original opinions with regard to the impolicy of the war. I am extremely sorry to find that he has not, because these opinions must necessarily have a great and decisive influence on the plan on which he will support it, as well as upon the terms on which he will be willing to put an end to it. An unjust and impolitic war never can be pursued like a war which we believe to be founded in justice and reason. Almost any peace appears to us to be good, which cuts short the duration of an impolitic war.

Besides, I must fairly say, that if a more mature consideration of the train of events, and his own solid judgement operating on that series of things, leave his mind exactly where it was with regard to the cause and principles of this war, (though I sincerely wish it may appear to *him* otherwise,) I confess I do not see any essential difference in the state of things in France at present, from what it was at the end of last session, when he made a formal motion for peace.

The great difficulty will be upon points, I fear, too important not to produce discussions; that is, what is the object of the war on the part of the enemy, and on our own? And on what grounds are terms of peace to be proposed?

If I understand it, this paper states two cases; one immediate, the other more remote. The first case is the present, in which the writer supposes that no person can make peace. I presume he means, in the actual state in which *administration* stands in France or in England, or in both. In this case he supposes that war, and the preparations of war, ought to go on.

Upon this I take the liberty to observe, that the state of administration is as transient as a glance of the eye; and that a change in them, either here or

there, would in an instant annihilate this case, and put us, on the supposition here stated, in a condition to treat for peace with the Jacobins.

The other is a case in which the determination is more strong and clear; and on its supposed existence Mr. Fox, or the writer of this paper, concludes, 'that the war is to be supported with vigour.' But then this case is somewhat remote, and somewhat contingent. It depends upon two hypotheses:—the first, that conditions of peace, such as described in that paper, are not accepted; and the second, that France shall not be in a negotiable condition.

As to the first hypothesis, if I understand the matter rightly, it supposes the rejection of the terms that our court shall offer 'with security, honour, and safety, to the constitution of this country.' Now what terms these are which we ought to offer, I cannot so much as guess. Nothing is specified; but it appears that some such are to be proposed, as a preliminary condition to any engagement on the part of the person for whom the paper speaks, for his 'carrying on the war with vigour'.

Besides, I must observe, that the case in this paper is stated, as if there were no political relations but such as exist between us and France. No notice is taken of our allies,—a material part of the consideration. Perhaps it is included in the word 'honour', but this is too lax to enable me to form any judgement.

The other hypothesis, upon which the war ought 'to be carried on with vigour', though last put, must be preliminary to the other;—that is, that France shall not be 'in a negotiable condition'. It is not said, nor even hinted, what state of things in France may be said to put her in a condition negotiable, or not negotiable. On this point there may be a very great variety of opinions. We know that such a variety does exist; and that some people seem to be persuaded that France is in a negotiable state at this very hour.

I am not at all in their sentiments. On the contrary,

I am very sure that France is not *now* at all in a negotiable condition. But I go further. I am satisfied there is not any reason to think that she will be, within a time to be calculated, in such a condition; and, therefore, I am humbly of opinion, that *now*, and for a good while to come, and without any preliminary suppositions, the war ought to be carried on with all possible vigour.

I am very far from wishing to put myself in the cautious defensive attitude of an adversary, with Mr. Fox. It is not without great pain that I differ from him at all. I therefore make no difficulty in telling him very frankly, when, and under such circumstances, I shall think France in a negotiable condition, and when not.

When I see a fundamental change in its whole system, by the extinction of Jacobin clubs, by the re-establishment of religion, and the restitution of property on its old foundations, and when I see a government, whatever it may be, founded upon that property, and regulated by it, I shall then think France in a negotiable condition.

Till then, I am of opinion, that no peace can be made with the fanatics of that country, under any name, or any shape they may assume, which will be safe, or which will not be, indeed, more effectually and permanently ruinous to us than any war.

I cannot persuade myself that this war bears any the least resemblance (other than that it is a war) to any that has ever existed in the world. I cannot persuade myself that any examples or any reasonings drawn from other wars and other politics are at all applicable to it; and I truly and sincerely think, that all other wars and all other politics have been the games of children, in comparison to it.

I do not know whether it be inferable directly from the paper, but I think it may indirectly be concluded from it, that if an administration could be formed in France, (though on Jacobin principles and with a Jacobin establishment,) which showed signs of

permanence and stability, we ought to enter into amity, possibly into an alliance, with that power. For my part, the more permanent the Jacobin system promises to be, the more I shall be alarmed at it; convinced as I am, and ever have been, that if that system is not destroyed in France, it will infallibly destroy the present order of things from one end of Europe to the other. We are, as I think, fighting for our *all*. In that conflict, when things are desperate, to be sure we must submit. But thus submitting, I am certain that a King of England will be no more than Cogidunus or King Prasutagus or any other of the Reguli, who held under the Romans in this country, or than a Nabob of Arcot, or a Soubah of Oude, under the East India Company;—and as to the people, property would not be, in England, really worth five years' purchase.

The conversations of your friend turned, it seems, a great deal on arrangements. On things of this nature, as I have seldom been consulted, I give no other than a general opinion, which is, that I most ardently wish and pray for a coalition of parties; but I wish, too, that a very full understanding of views and maxims should precede that coalition, lest, under an appearance of quieting the dissensions of the kingdom, we should see an administration formed, which would be torn to pieces within itself whilst it continued, and would very speedily break up with resentments kindled into tenfold fury, to the infinite aggravation of the public calamities, and the utter ruin of the kingdom.

It is late, and I cannot send you this by to-night's post; but you will have it on Wednesday.

I am, with the most sincere affection,

My dear sir,

Your most faithful and obedient humble servant,

EDM. BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO  
REV. DR. HUSSEY

*Beaconsfield, May 18, 1795.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I don't know exactly why I am so unwilling to write by the post. I have little to say that might not be known to the world; at the same time, there is something unpleasant in talking the confidential language of friendship in the public theatre. It is still worse to put it into the power of any one to make unfaithful representations of it, or to make it the subject of malicious comments. I thank you for your letter; it is full of that good sense and good temper, as well as of that fortitude, which are natural to you. Since persons of so much greater authority than I am, and of so much better judgement, are of opinion you ought to stay, it was clearly right for you to remain at all risks. Indeed, if it could be done with tolerable safety, I wished you to watch over the cradle of those seminaries, on which the future weal or woe of Ireland essentially depends. For you, I dread the revolutionary tribunal of Drogheda. For the country, if some proper mode of education is not adopted, I tremble for the spread of atheism amongst the Catholics. I do not like the style of the meeting<sup>1</sup> in Francis Street. The tone was wholly Jacobinical. In Parliament, the language of your friends (one only excepted,) was what it ought to be. But that one speech, though full of fire and animation, was not warmed with the fire of heaven. I am sorry for it. I have seen that gentleman but once. He is certainly a man of parts; but one who has dealt too much in the philosophy of France. Justice, prudence, tenderness, moderation, and Christian charity, ought to become the measures of tolerance; and not a cold apathy, or indeed, rather a savage hatred, to all

<sup>1</sup> The assembly of the Roman Catholics held April 9th, 1795. in Francis Street chapel.

religion, and an avowed contempt of all those points on which we differ, and on those about which we agree. If what was said in Francis Street was in the first heat, it might be excused. They were given to understand that a change of administration, short only of a revolution in violence, was made, only on account of a disposition in a Lord-Lieutenant to favour Catholics. Many provoking circumstances attended the business; not the least of them was, that they saw themselves delivered over to their enemies, on no other apparent ground of merit than that they were such. All this is very true; but under every provocation they ought not to be irritated by their enemies out of their principles, and out of their senses. The language of the day went plainly to a separation of the two kingdoms. God forbid, that anything like it should ever happen! They would both be ruined by it; but Ireland would suffer most and first. The thing, however, is impossible. Those who should attempt that improbability would be undone. If ever the arms, which, indirectly, these orators seem to menace, were to be taken up, surely the threat of such a measure is not wise, as it could add nothing to their strength, but would give every possible advantage to their enemies. It is a foolish language, adopted from the United Irishmen, that their grievances originate from England. The direct contrary. It is an ascendancy which some of their own factions have obtained here, that has hurt the Catholics with this Government. It is not as an English Government that ministers act in that manner, but as assisting a party in Ireland. When they talk of dissolving themselves as a Catholic body, and mixing their grievances with those of their country, all I have to say is, that they lose their own importance as a body by this amalgamation; and they sink real matters of complaint in those which are factious and imaginary. For, in the name of God, what grievance has Ireland, as Ireland, to complain of with regard to Great Britain; unless the protection of the most

powerful country upon earth,—giving all her privileges, without exception, in common to Ireland, and reserving to herself only the painful pre-eminence of ten-fold burdens, be a matter of complaint. The subject, as a subject, is as free in Ireland as he is in England. As a member of the Empire, an Irishman has every privilege of a natural-born Englishman, in every part of it, in every occupation, and in every branch of commerce. No monopoly is established against him anywhere; and the great staple manufacture of Ireland is not only not prohibited, not only not discouraged, but it is privileged in a manner that has no example. The provision trade is the same; nor does Ireland, on her part, take a single article from England, but what she has with more advantage than she could have it from any nation upon earth. I say nothing of the immense advantage she derives from the use of the English capital. In what country upon earth is it, that a quantity of linens, the moment they are lodged in the warehouse, and before the sale, would entitle the Irish merchant or manufacturer to draw bills on the terms, and at the time, in which this is done by the warehouseman on London? Ireland, therefore, as Ireland, whether it be taken civilly, constitutionally, or commercially, suffers no grievance. The Catholics, as Catholics, do; and what can be got by joining their real complaint to a complaint which is fictitious, but to make the whole pass for fiction and groundless pretence? I am not a man for construing with too much rigour the expressions of men under a sense of ill-usage. I know that much is to be given to passion; and I hope I am more disposed to accuse the person who provokes another to anger, than the person who gives way to natural feelings in hot language. If this be all, it is no great matter; but, if anger only brings out a plan that was before meditated, and laid up in the mind, the thing is more serious. The tenor of the speeches in Francis Street, attacking the idea of an incorporating union between the two kingdoms, expressed principles

that went the full length of a separation, and of a dissolution of that union, which arises from their being under the same crown. That Ireland would, in that case, come to make a figure amongst the nations, is an idea which has more of the ambition of individuals in it, than of a sober regard to the happiness of a whole people. But if a people were to sacrifice solid quiet to empty glory, as on some occasions they have done; under the circumstances of Ireland, *she*, most assuredly, never would obtain that independent glory, but would certainly lose all her tranquillity, all her prosperity, and even that degree of lustre which she has, by the very free and very honourable connexion she enjoys with a nation the most splendid and the most powerful upon earth. Ireland, *constitutionally*, is independent; *politically*, she never can be so. It is a struggle against nature. She must be protected, and there is no protection to be found for her, but either from France or England. France, even if (under any form she may assume) she were disposed to give the same liberal and honourable protection to Ireland, has not the means of either serving or hurting her, that are in the hands of Great Britain. She might make Ireland (supposing that kind of independence could be maintained, which for a year I am certain it could not) a dreadful thorn in the side of this kingdom; but Ireland would dearly buy that malignant and infernal satisfaction, by a dependence upon a power, either despotic, as formerly, or anarchical, as at present. We see, well enough, the kind of liberty which she either enjoys herself, or is willing to bestow on others. This I say with regard to the scheme of those who call themselves United Irishmen; that is to say, of those who, without any regard to religion, club all kinds of discontents together, in order to produce all kinds of disorders. But to speak to Catholics, as such, it is plain that whatever security they enjoy for their religion, as well as for the many solid advantages which, even under the present restrictions, they are entitled to, depends wholly upon their

connexion with this kingdom. France is an enemy to all religion ; but eminently, and with a peculiar malignity, an enemy to the Catholic religion, which they mean, if they can, to extirpate throughout the globe. It is something perverse, and even unnatural, for Catholics to hear even the sound of a connexion with France ; unless, under the colour and pretext of a religious description, they should, as some have done in this country, form themselves into a mischievous political faction. Catholics, as things now stand, have all the splendid abilities, and much of the independent property in Parliament in their favour, and every Protestant (I believe with very few exceptions) who is really a Christian. Should they alienate these men from their cause, their choice is amongst those, who, indeed, may have ability, but not wisdom or temper in proportion ; and whose very ability is not equal, either in strength or exercise, to that which they lose. They will have to choose men of desperate property, or of no property ; and men of no religious, and no moral principle. Without a Protestant connexion of some kind or other, they cannot go on ; and here are the two sorts of descriptions of Protestants between whom they have an option to make. In this state of things, their situation, I allow, is difficult and delicate. If the better part lies by, in a sullen silence, they still cannot hinder the more factious part both from speaking and from writing ; and the sentiments of those who are silent will be judged by the effusions of the people, who do not wish to conceal thoughts that the sober part of mankind will not approve. On the other hand, if the better and more temperate part come forward to disclaim the others, they instantly make a breach in their own party, of which a malignant enemy will take advantage to crush them all. They will praise the sober part, but they will grant them nothing they shall desire ; 'nay, they will make use of their submission as a proof that sober men are perfectly satisfied in remaining prostrate under their oppressive hands. These are dreadful dilemmas ; and

they are such as ever will arise, when men in power are possessed with a crafty malignant disposition, without any real wisdom or enlarged policy.

However, as, in every case of difficulty, there is a better way of proceeding and a worse, and that some medium may be found between an abject and, for that reason, an imprudent submission, and a contumacious, absurd resistance,—what I would humbly suggest is, that on occasion of the declamations in the newspaper, they should make, not an apology, (for that is dishonourable and dangerous,) but a strong charge on their enemies for defamation; disclaiming the tenets, practices, and designs, impudently attributed to them, and asserting, in cool, modest, and determined language, their resolution to assert the privileges to which, as good citizens and good subjects, they hold themselves entitled, without being intimidated or wearied out by the opposition of the monopolists of the kingdom. In this, there will be nothing mean or servile, or which can carry any appearance of the effect of fear; but the contrary. At the same time, it will remove the prejudices which, on this side of the water as well as on yours, are propagated against you with so much systematic pains. I think the committee would do well to do something of this kind in their own name. I trust those men of great ability in that committee, who incline to think that the Catholics ought to melt down their cause into the general mass of uncertain discontents and unascertained principles, will, I hope, for the sake of agreeing with those whom, I am sure, they love and respect among their own brethren, as well as for the sake of the kingdom at large, waive that idea (which I do not deny to be greatly provoked) of dissolving the Catholic body before the objects of its union are obtained, and turning the objects of their relief into a national quarrel. This, I am satisfied, on recollection, they will think not irrational. The course taken by the enemy often becomes a fair rule of action. You see, by the whole turn of the debate against them, that

their adversaries endeavoured to give this colour to the contest, and to make it hinge on this principle. The same policy cannot be good for you and your enemies. Sir George Shee, who is so good to take this, waits, or I should say more on this point. I should say something too of the colleges. I long much to hear how you go on. I have, however, said too much. If Grattan, by whom I wish the Catholics to be wholly advised, thinks differently from me, I wish the whole unsaid. You see, Lord Fitzwilliam sticks nobly to his text, and neither abandons his cause or his friends, though he has few indeed to support him. When you can, pray let me hear from you. Mrs. Burke and myself, in this lonely and disconsolate house, never cease to think of you as we ought to do. I send some prints to Dublin; but, as your house is not there, I reserve a memorial of my dear Richard for your return.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Faithfully, and affectionately,

Your miserable friend,

EDM. BURKE.

TO DR. LAURENCE

*Friday Night, 10 o'clock, November 18, 1796.*

MY DEAR LAURENCE,

I have been out of sorts for several days past, but have not been so much weakened by that circumstance as I might have feared. I don't desire long letters from you, but, I confess, I wish a line now and then, I mean very near literally, a *line*. The present state of things, both here and in Ireland, as well as abroad, seems to me to grow every moment more critical. In Ireland it is plain they have thrown off all sort of political management, and even the decorous appearance of it. They had for their commander-in-chief Cuninghame, a person utterly unacquainted with military affairs beyond what was necessary for a quartermaster-

general in a peaceable country—He had never seen war, hardly in any image, but he was a man of a moderate and humane disposition, and one, from whom no acts of atrocity were to be apprehended. In order to remove him from the command of the army, they have made him a peer. This was a step to the appointment of Luttrell, to the full as little experienced in any real military service as Cuninghame but younger and of far different dispositions. In case of an actual invasion, they could not expect anything whatsoever from his military skill or talents. The only proof they had of either has been in his desperate promptitude, without either civil, criminal, or martial law, to seize upon poor ploughmen in their cottages, and to send them bound where he thought fit. By what he is capable of and by what he is incapable, they show in what manner it is they mean to provide for the military defence and for the civil tranquillity and happiness of Ireland. They have fomented a spirit of discord upon principle in that unhappy country. They have set the Protestants, in the only part of the country in which the Protestants have any degree of strength, to massacre the Catholics. The consequence will be this, if it is not the case already, that instead of dividing these two factions, the Catholics, finding themselves outlawed by their Government, which has not only employed the arm of abused authority against them, but the violence of lawless insurrection, will use the only means that is left for their protection in a league with those persons who have been encouraged to fall upon them, and who are as well disposed to rebel against all government, as to persecute their unoffending fellow citizens. The Parliament, encouraged by the Lord-Lieutenant's Secretary, has refused so much as to inquire into these troubles. The only appearance of any inquiry which has been, is that put into the hands of a person, I mean the Attorney-General, one of the avowed enemies and persecutors of the suffering people, and in the closest connexion with them. I see that the affections of the

people are not so much as looked to, as any one of the resources for the defence of Ireland against the invasion which the enemy will make upon that country, if they have force enough to do it consistently with their other views ; but, I confess, that from the least reflexion I am able to make in the intervals of pain and sorrow, I do not think that the invasion of either of these countries is a primary object in their present plan of policy—their views seem to me to be directed elsewhere, and their object is, to disable this country from any effectual resistance to them, by alarming us with fears for our domestic safety. They have gained their ends completely. The arrangements, which we have made and are making in both kingdoms for that safety, provide for it in the worst possible manner, whilst they effectually disable us from opposing the enemy upon his larger and real plan of attack—We oppose to his *false* attack the whole of our *real* strength. I have long doubted of the use of a militia, constituted as our militia is ; because I do not like in time of war any permanent body of regular troops in so considerable a number as perhaps to equal the whole of our other force, when it is only applicable to one and that but a very uncertain part of the demands of general service. Whether I am right or wrong may be a question with persons better informed than I am, but it has been my opinion at least these twenty years. If I did not declare it in Parliament, it was because the prejudice was too strong to be prudently resisted ; but when danger comes, strong prejudices will be found weak resources.

Whatever the merits of militia may be, I am sure that no prudent persons with whom I have ever conversed have been of opinion that it ought to be extended beyond the old number. Other ideas however have prevailed. The infant resources of Ireland have been exhausted by establishing a militia there, upon the feeble plan of the militia *here*, and with consequences much more justly to be apprehended from an abuse of that institution. Whether with regard to the economical

and civil effects on the military, they have now in both kingdoms added immensely to that erroneous establishment, if erroneous it is, and have thereby doubled the weakness instead of augmenting the strength of these kingdoms. I believe it will be found, that in both countries there is, by personal service or by public charge, the burden of an army forming or formed of at least fourscore thousand men utterly unapplicable to the general service of the country, or to the conservation of what I shall ever think as much for its being as self defence itself, I mean the safety and liberty of Europe. The very idea of active defence, the only sure defence, which consists in offensive operations against your enemy, seems wholly to be abandoned.

I know it will be said that these corps do not bring upon the nation the burden of half pay—This is true but in part, and in my opinion, if war should continue, it will become less and less of an object. At any rate it will be found as economy a very poor resource to make out such a saving by the limitation of effect and service.

I do not mean to say that such little aids to the police as by an occasional use of a yeoman cavalry, which is in the nature *Maréchaussée*, is much to be condemned. If the service is not much, the charge is not ruinous, and our military arm is not crippled. In my opinion, the expense of these arrangements would furnish such a subsidy to Russia, as would enable that power to act with such a body of troops against the common enemy, as to do more for our real defence than from any home arrangements that we can make. I have said enough upon this subject, though by no means all that is in my mind; but if you agree with me in principle, your own thoughts will more than supply my omissions.

I have suffered great uneasiness from another scheme, the tendency of which evidently is (though I am of opinion nothing is less intended) totally to disgust the people with the continuance of this war—

I mean that part of the people upon whose soundness and spirit the very being of civil society at this time depends, that is, that part of the people who live with a degree of decency upon an income not likely to improve. They are the part of the community which are naturally attached to stability and to the resistance of innovation, but are not qualified to afford pecuniary resources to the State. They may serve to furnish a contingent in the way of taxes which is to be supplied as their income accrues, or as their economy finds supply, but they have no hoards, and if you apply to them for a forced loan, you drive them into the toils of the usurers, who will disable them from paying what they are already charged to the support of the State. Sure it were better to borrow directly at a high interest, that is at the interest of the public necessities, and to lay upon those men their share of it, than to take this perplexed circuitous course, which, in the end, will weaken public credit by destroying most of the private credit of the kingdom.

• I was going further, when my friendly Amanuensis reminded me that it is near 10 o'clock; I am afraid I have tired you, though I tire myself somewhat less by dictating a sheet than by writing twenty lines. However, one is more wordy when one dictates. I intended if I had time, to tell you that Keogh is come to London, and to wish to have yours and Lord Fitzwilliam's, as well as Mr. Windham's thoughts upon the subject of his journey, when I know better of what nature it may be. He shows a very great desire of seeing me and conversing with me upon the subject of Ireland. I have fought it off by giving him very true reasons, that is to say, my feeble state of health, and the *contempt* that is entertained for my opinions, especially in what relates to Ireland.—He tells me he has not been with any minister. He is a man that on the whole I think ought not to be slighted, though he is but too much disposed to Jacobin principles and connexions in his own nature,

and is a Catholic only in name—not but that whole body, contrary to its nature, has been driven by art and policy into Jacobinism, in order to form a pretext to multiply the jobs and to increase the power of that foolish and profligate junto to which Ireland is delivered over as a farm. I shall let you know further about Keogh when I hear from him ; and I shall send to Lord Fitzwilliam his letters to me, as well as a copy of my answer to him—I shall send you another copy—Good night.

Yours ever,  
EDMUND BURKE.

TO THE SAME

*Beaconsfield, December 25, 1796.*

MY DEAR LAURENCE,

I agree with you, that the footing upon which the Ministers had put their negotiation, involves them in difficulties with regard not only to the Opposition, but to themselves and their sole ally, and to the sole ally which they had hopes of acquiring, as well as to the miserable inhabitants of the islands who had incorporated themselves upon our faith into the British Empire ; and who never henceforward can strike a blow with heart either in their own favour, or that of our feeble and perfidious Government. Surely, this business will give you a fair opportunity of coming forward. You cannot appear with more lustre or at a better season, for explaining the silent vote you have given, as well as in asserting the principles which might seem to be rendered doubtful by that vote. I suppose Lord Fitzwilliam will come up in consequence of the Duke of Bedford's motion, if not upon the message.—Pray send me word by the coach whether it went down yesterday, and if it did not, when it is to be looked for.—It is a very extraordinary thing, that merely because Lord Malmesbury, in execution of his wretched and contemptible office, proposed to

keep two places that we had taken, and not from France, that he should be turned off at eight and forty hours notice. Good God, what were the humiliations which the President de la Rouillie and the Marquis de Toacy suffered in Holland, in comparison of this. They never were sent away at all; on the contrary, though their offers were not received, they were invited in the most pressing manner to stay. I fear the nation is not equal to this trial, and that having been once kicked, they may think they may as well be kicked on to the end of the chapter. 'Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!' and Lord Malmesbury will be found, at least I greatly fear it, a true representative of the people of England. Adieu, and many happy returns of the season. We are sorry not to have had you at our turkey and roast beef. Alas! the times have been, when you would have found a more full and cheerful family, but I was unworthy of it, and have lost it by my own fault. Learn from me never to trifle with such blessings as God may give you. I forgot to speak to you about Mackintosh's supposed conversion. I suspect by his letter, that it does not extend beyond the interior politics of this island, but that, with regard to France and many other countries, he remains as frank a Jacobin as ever. This conversion is none at all; but we must nurse up these nothings, and think these negative advantages as we can have them. Such as he is, I shall not be displeased if you bring him down; bad as he may be, he has not yet declared war along with his poor friend *Wild* against the Pope.

Ever, ever yours.

E. B.

The accounts from poor Woodford seem to be a little better. This weather is sadly against a case and cure like his.

TO THE SAME

*Beaconsfield, December 28, 1796.*

MY DEAR LAURENCE,

The declaration, though it has not astonished me, has not given me great defection of spirits. There is a sort of staggering and irresolution in the cowardice of others, but there is a sort of unconquerable firmness, a kind of boldness, in the pusillanimity of Mr. Pitt. His madness is of the moping kind, but it is not the less frenzy for being fixed in lowness and dejection. He is actually taking every means to divest this country of any alliance or possibility of alliance, and he is determined that no spirit shall arise within this country, not knowing what course that spirit might take. I do not know whether I ought to be glad or not, of Lord Fitzwilliam's coming to town. I think it is impossible to attack Pitt for want of sincerity in this negotiation; though for wisdom it cannot be defended. I do not wonder that they endeavour to struggle for a port in the East Indies, and for a half-way house at the Cape, for unless they had made Holland truly independent and fixed her in attachment to us, these places would be virtually given to the French, and we could not maintain ourselves in the West Indies, out of which at some time or other they mean to drive us. When I say I do not wonder at it, I am so far from approving it that my soul abhors it, but I much more abhor their fatal system, out of the perplexities of which nothing can disengage them, but their totally abandoning it. I am glad that the business is put off to Friday, because your cold may then become better. This thaw favours your recovery. A cough is not to be trifled with, especially in a full habit like yours. Unless a physician had dissuaded it, I wished you had been blooded. I wish you to take advice: that bleeding may yet be useful.

Mrs. Burke and myself, though neither of us passed

a good night, are not worse to-day. God bless you. The times are bad when experience does nothing towards the correction of error.

Yours ever,  
E. B.

FROM MR. BURKE TO THOMAS KEOGH, ESQ.,  
GRAY'S-INN COFFEE-HOUSE

*Beaconsfield, November 17, 1796.*

SIR,

I am so much out of the world, that I am not surprised every one should be ignorant of, as he is uninterested in, the state of my health, my habits of life, or anything else that belongs to me.

Your obliging letter of the 20th of July was delivered to me at Bath, to which place I was driven by urgent necessity, as my only chance of preserving a life which did not then promise a month's duration. I was directed to suspend all application to business, even to the writing of a common letter; as it was thought that I had suffered by some such application, and by the attendant anxiety, before and about that time. I returned from Bath not well, but much recovered from the state in which I had been; and I continued in the same condition of convalescence for a month or six weeks longer. Soon after I began gradually to decline, and at this moment I do not find myself very materially better or stronger than when I was sent to Bath.

I am obliged to you for the offer which you made in that letter, of conveying anything from me to Ireland; but I really thought you had known that I have no kind of correspondence or communication with that country, and that for a good while I had not taken any part whatsoever in its affairs. I believe you must have observed when last I had the honour of seeing you in London, how little any opinions of mine are likely to prevail with persons in power here, even with those with whom I had formerly a long and

intimate connexion. I never see any of His Majesty's Ministers, except one gentleman, who, from mere compassion, has paid me some visits in this my retreat, and has endeavoured by his generous sympathy to soothe my pains and my sorrows: but that gentleman has no concern in Irish affairs, nor is, I believe, consulted about them. I cannot conceive how you or anybody can think that any sentiments of mine are called for, or even admitted, when it is notorious, that there is nothing at home, or abroad, in war, or in peace, that I have the good fortune to be at all pleased with. I ought to presume that they who have a great public trust, who are of distinguished abilities, and who are in the vigour of their life, behold things in a juster point of view than I am able to see them, however my self-partiality may make me too tenacious of my own opinion. I am in no degree of confidence with the great leader either of Ministry or Opposition.

In a general way, I am but too well acquainted with the distracted state of Ireland, and with the designs of the public enemy pointed at that kingdom. I have my own thoughts upon the causes of those evils. You do me justice in saying in your letter of July, that I am a true Irishman. Considering as I do England as my country, of long habit, of obligation, and of establishment, and that my primary duties are hers, I cannot conceive how a man can be a genuine Englishman, without being at the same time a true Irishman, though fortune should have made his birth on this side the water. I think the same sentiments ought to be reciprocal on the part of Ireland, and if possible with much stronger reason. Ireland cannot be separated one moment from England, without losing every source of her present prosperity, and even hope of her future. I am very much afflicted, deeply and bitterly afflicted, to see that a very small faction in Ireland should arrogate it to itself to be the whole of that great kingdom; I am more afflicted in seeing that a very minute part of that small faction should be able to persuade any person here, that on

the support of their power the connexion of the two kingdoms essentially depends. This strange error, if persevered in (as I am afraid it will), must accomplish the ruin of both countries. At the same time I must as bitterly regret, that any persons who suffer by the predominance of that corrupt fragment of a faction, should totally mistake the cause of their evils, as well as their remedy; if a remedy can be at all looked for; which I confess I am not sanguine enough to expect in any event, or from the exertions of any person; and least of all from exertions of mine, even if I had either health or prospect of life commensurate to so difficult an undertaking. I say, I do regret, that the conduct of those who suffer should give any advantage to those who are resolved to tyrannize. I do believe that this conduct has served only as a pretext for aggravating the calamities of that party, which though superior in number, is from many circumstances much inferior in force.

I believe there are very few cases which will justify a revolt against the established government of a country, let its constitution be what it will; and even though its abuses should be great and provoking; but I am sure there is no case in which it is justifiable, either to conscience or to prudence, *to menace resistance* when there is no means of effecting it, nor perhaps in the major part any disposition. You know the state of that country better than I can pretend to do, but I could wish, if there was any use in retrospect, that those menaces had been forborne; because they have caused a real alarm in some weak though well intentioned minds; and because they furnish the bold and crafty with pretences for exciting a prosecution of a much more fierce and terrible nature than I ever remember, even when the country was under a system of laws, apparently less favourable to its tranquillity and good government, at the same time that sober exertion has lessened in the exact proportion in which flashy menaces increased. Pusillanimity (as often it does) has succeeded to rage and fury. Against all

reason, experience, and observation, many persons in Ireland have taken it into their heads, that the influence of the Government here has been the cause of the misdemeanour of persons in power in that country, and that they are suffering under the yoke of a British domination. I must speak the truth—I must say, that all the evils of Ireland originate within itself; that it is the boundless credit which is given to an Irish Cabal, that produces whatever mischiefs both countries may feel in their relation. England has hardly anything to do with Irish Government. I heartily wish it were otherwise; but the body of the people of England, even the most active politicians, take little or no concern in the affairs of Ireland. They are, therefore, by the Minister of this country, who fears upon that account no responsibility here, and who shuns all responsibility in Ireland, abandoned to the direction of those who are actually in possession of its internal government: this has been the case more eminently for these five or six last years; and it is a system, if it deserves that name, not likely to be altered.

I conceive that the last disturbances, and those the most important, and which have the deepest root, do not originate, nor have they their greatest strength, among the Catholics: but there is, and ever has been, a strong republican Protestant faction in Ireland, which has persecuted the Catholics as long as persecution would answer their purpose, and now the same faction would dupe them to become accomplices in effectuating the same purposes; and thus either by tyranny or seduction would accomplish their ruin. It was with grief I saw last year with the Catholic Delegates a gentleman, who was not of their religion, or united to them in any avowable bond of a public interest, acting as their secretary, in their most confidential concerns. I afterwards found, that this gentleman's name was implicated in a correspondence with certain Protestant conspirators and traitors, who are acting in direct connexion with the

enemies of all government and religion. He might be innocent; and I am very sure that those who employed and trusted him, were perfectly ignorant of his treasonable correspondences and designs, if such he had; but as he has thought proper to quit the king's dominions about the time of the investigation of that conspiracy, unpleasant inferences may have been drawn from it. I never saw him but once, which was in your company, and at that time knew nothing of his connexions, character, or dispositions.

I am never likely to be called upon for my advice in this, or in any business; and after having once almost forcibly obtruded myself into it, and having found no sort of good effect from my uncalled-for interference, I shall certainly, though I should have better health than I can flatter myself with, never again thrust myself into those intricate affairs. Persons of much greater abilities, rank, and consequence than I am, and who had been called by their situation to those affairs, have been totally overwhelmed by the domineering party in Ireland, and have been disgraced and ruined; as far as independence, honour, and virtue can be ruined and disgraced. However, if your leisure permits you to pay a visit to this melancholy infirmary, I shall certainly receive any information with which you are pleased to furnish me; but merely as news, and what may serve to feed the little interest I take in this world. You will excuse my having used the hand of a confidential friend in this letter, for indeed I suffer much by stooping to write.

I have the honour to be, &c.

EDMUND BURKE.

THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO REV. DR.  
HUSSEY

*December, 1796.*

MY DEAR SIR,

This morning I received your letter of the 30th of November from Maynooth. I dictate my answer

from my couch, on which I am obliged to lie for a good part of the day. I cannot conceal from you, much less can I conceal from myself, that in all probability I am not long for this world. Indeed, things are in such a situation, independently of the domestic wound, that I never could have less reason for regret in quitting the world than at this moment ; and my end will be, by several, as little regretted.

I have no difficulty at all in communicating to you, or, if it were any use, to mankind at large, my sentiments and feelings on the dismal state of things in Ireland ; but I find it difficult indeed to give you the advice you are pleased to ask, as to your own conduct in your very critical situation.

You state, what has long been but too obvious, that it seems the unfortunate policy of the hour, to put to the far largest portion of the king's subjects in Ireland the desperate alternative, between a thankless acquiescence under grievous oppression, or a refuge in Jacobinism, with all its horrors and all its crimes. You prefer the former dismal part of the choice. There is no doubt but that you would have reason, if the election of one of these evils was at all a security against the other. But they are things very alliable, and as closely connected as cause and effect. That Jacobinism which is speculative in its origin, and which arises from wantonness and fullness of bread, may possibly be kept under by firmness and prudence. The very levity of character which produces it, may extinguish it. But Jacobinism which arises from penury and irritation, from scorned loyalty and rejected allegiance, has much deeper roots. They take their nourishment from the bottom of human nature, and the unalterable constitution of things, and not from humour and caprice, or the opinions of the day about privileges and liberties. These roots will be shot into the depths of hell, and will at last raise up their proud tops to heaven itself. This radical evil may baffle the attempts of heads much wiser than those are, who, in the petulance and riot of their

drunken power, are neither ashamed nor afraid to insult and provoke those whom it is their duty, and ought to be their glory, to cherish and protect.

So then, the little wise men of the west, with every hazard of this evil, are resolved to persevere in the manly and well-timed resolution of a war against Popery. In the principle, and in all the proceedings, it is perfectly suited to their character. They begin this last series of their offensive operations, by laying traps for the consciences of poor foot-soldiers. They call these wretches to their church, (empty of a volunteer congregation,) not by the bell, but by the whip. This ecclesiastic military discipline is happily taken up, in order to form an army of well-scourged Papists into a firm phalanx for the support of the Protestant religion. I wish them joy of this their valuable discovery in theology, politics, and the art military. Fashion governs the world, and it is the fashion in the great French Empire of pure and perfect Protestantism, as well as in the little busy meddling province of servile imitators, that apes at a humble distance the tone of its capital, to make a crusade against you poor Catholics. But whatever may be thought in Ireland of its share of a war against the Pope in that out-lying part of Europe, the zealous Protestant, Bonaparte, has given his late holiness far more deadly blows, in the centre of his own power, and in the nearest seats of his influence, than the Irish directory can arrogate to itself within its own jurisdiction, from the utmost efforts of its political and military skill. I have my doubts (they may perhaps arise from my ignorance) whether the glories of the night expeditions, in surprising the cabin fortresses in Louth and Meath, or whether the slaughter and expulsion of the Catholic weavers by another set of zealots in Armagh, or even the proud trophies of the late potato field<sup>1</sup> in that county, are

<sup>1</sup> Burke alludes to popular disturbances in Louth and Meath, and the very questionable means taken by

quite to be compared with the Protestant victories on the plains of Lombardy, or to the possession of the flat of Bologna, or to the approaching sack of Rome, where, even now, the Protestant commissaries give the law. In all this business, Great Britain, to us merely secular politicians, makes no great figure, but let the glory of Great Britain shift for itself as it may. All is well, provided Popery is crushed.

This war against Popery furnishes me with a clue that leads me out of a maze of perplexed politics, which, without it, I could not in the least understand. I now can account for the whole. Lord Malmesbury is sent to prostrate the dignity of the English monarchy at Paris, that an Irish, Popish common soldier may be whipped in, to give an appearance of habitation, to a deserted Protestant church in Ireland:—Thus we balance the account;—defeat and dishonour abroad; oppression at home. We sneak to the regicides, but we boldly trample on our poor fellow-citizens. But all is for the Protestant cause.

The same ruling principle explains the rest. We have abdicated the crown of Corsica, which had been newly soldered to the crown of Great Britain and to the crown of Ireland, lest the British diadem should look too like the Pope's triple crown. We have run away from the people of Corsica, and abandoned them without capitulation of any kind in favour of those of them, who might be our friends; but then it was for their having capitulated with us for Popery, as a part of their Constitution. We made amends for our sins by our repentance, and for our apostasy from Protestantism, by a breach of faith with Popery. We have fled, overspread with dirt and ashes, but with hardly enough of sackcloth to cover our nakedness. We recollected that this island (together with its yews and its other salubrious productions) had the Irish Government to suppress them; to the attacks on the Catholics in Armagh by Orangemen; and probably to the 'Battle of the Diamond' in that county, in Sept. 1795.

given birth to the illustrious champion of the Protestant world, Bonaparte. It was, therefore, not fit (to use the favourite French expression) that the cradle of this religious hero should be polluted by the feet of the British renegade slaves, who had stipulated to support Popery in that island, whilst his friends and fellow-missionaries are so gloriously employed in extirpating it in another. Our policy is growing every day into more and more consistency. We have showed our broad back to the Mediterranean; we have abandoned too the very hope of an alliance in Italy; we have relinquished the Levant to the Jacobins; we have considered our trade as nothing; our policy and our honour went along with it. But all these objects were well sacrificed to remove the very suspicion of giving any assistance to that abomination the Pope, in his insolent attempts to resist a truly Protestant power resolved to humble the papal tiara, and to prevent his pardons and dispensations from being any longer the standing terror of the wise and virtuous directory of Ireland; who cannot sit down with any tolerable comfort to an innocent little job, whilst his bulls are thundering through the world. I ought to suppose that the arrival of General Hoche is eagerly expected in Ireland; for he, too, is a most zealous Protestant, and he has given proof of it, by the studied cruelties and insults by which he put to death the old Bishop of Dol, whom (but from the mortal fear I am in lest the suspicion of Popery should attach upon me) I should call a glorious martyr, and should class him amongst the most venerable prelates that have appeared in this century. It is to be feared, however, that the zealots will be disappointed in their pious hopes, by the season of the year, and the bad condition of the Jacobin navy; which may keep him this winter from giving his brother Protestants his kind assistance in accomplishing with you, what the other friend of the cause, Bonaparte, is doing in Italy; and what the masters of these two pious men, the Protestant Directory of France have so thoroughly accomplished

in that, the most Popish, but unluckily, whilst Popish, the most cultivated, the most populous, and the most flourishing of all countries,—the Austrian Netherlands.

When I consider the narrowness of the views, and the total want of human wisdom displayed in our western crusade against Popery, it is impossible to speak of it but with every mark of contempt and scorn. Yet one cannot help shuddering with horror when one contemplates the terrible consequences that are frequently the results of craft united with folly, placed in an unnatural elevation. Such ever will be the issue of things, when the mean vices attempt to mimic the grand passions. Great men will never do great mischief but for some great end. For this, they must be in a state of inflammation, and, in a manner, out of themselves. Among the nobler animals, whose blood is hot, the bite is never poisonous, except when the creature is mad; but in the cold-blooded reptile race, whose poison is exalted by the chemistry of their icy complexion, their venom is the result of their health, and of the perfection of their nature. Woe to the country in which such snakes, whose *primum mobile* is their belly, obtain wings, and from serpents become dragons. It is not that these people want natural talents, and even a good cultivation; on the contrary, they are the sharpest and most sagacious of mankind in the things to which they apply. But having wasted their faculties upon base and unworthy objects, in anything of a higher order, they are far below the common rate of two-legged animals.

I have nothing more to say just now upon the directory in Ireland, which, indeed, is alone worth any mention at all. As to the half-dozen (or half-score as it may be) of gentlemen, who, under various names of authority, are sent from hence to be the subordinate agents of that low order of beings, I consider them as wholly out of the question. Their virtues or their vices; their ability or their weakness; are matters of no sort of consideration. You feel the thing very rightly. All the evils of Ireland originate

within itself. That unwise body, the United Irishmen, have had the folly to represent those evils as owing to this country, when, in truth, its chief guilt is in its total neglect, its utter oblivion, its shameful indifference, and its entire ignorance of Ireland, and of everything that relates to it, and not in any oppressive disposition towards that unknown region. No such disposition exists. English government has farmed out Ireland, without the reservation of a peppercorn rent, in power or influence, public or individual, to the little narrow faction that domineers there. Through that alone they see, feel, hear, or understand, anything relative to that kingdom. Nor do they any way interfere, that I know of, except in giving their countenance, and the sanction of their names, to whatever is done by that junto.

Ireland has derived some advantage from its independence on the Parliament of this kingdom, or rather, it did derive advantage from the arrangements that were made at the time of the establishment of that independence. But human blessings are mixed, and I cannot but think, that even these great blessings were bought dearly enough, when along with the weight of the authority, they have totally lost all benefit from the superintendence of the British Parliament. Our pride of England is succeeded by fear. It is little less than a breach of order, even to mention Ireland in the House of Commons of Great Britain. If the people of Ireland were to be flayed alive by the predominant faction, it would be the most critical of all attempts, so much as to discuss the subject in any public assembly upon this side of the water. If such a faction should hereafter happen, by its folly or its iniquity, or both, to promote disturbances in Ireland, the force paid by this kingdom (supposing our own insufficient) would infallibly be employed to redress them. This would be right enough, and indeed our duty, if our public councils at the same time possessed and employed the means of inquiring into the merits of that cause, in which their blood and treasure were

to be laid out. By a strange inversion of the order of things, not only the largest part of the natives of Ireland are thus annihilated, but the Parliament of Great Britain itself is rendered no better than an instrument in the hands of an Irish faction. This is ascendancy with a witness! In what all this will end, it is not impossible to conjecture; though the exact time of the accomplishment cannot be fixed with the same certainty as you may calculate an eclipse.

As to your particular conduct, it has undoubtedly been that of a good and faithful subject, and of a man of integrity and honour. You went to Ireland this last time, as you did the first time, at the express desire of the English minister of that department, and at the request of the Lord-Lieutenant himself. You were fully aware of the difficulties that would attend your mission; and I was equally sensible of them. Yet you consented, and I advised, that you should obey the voice of what we considered an indispensable duty. We regarded, as the great evil of the time, the growth of Jacobinism, and we were very well assured, that, from a variety of causes, no part of these countries was more favourable to the growth and progress of that evil than our unfortunate country. I considered it as a tolerably good omen, that Government would do nothing further to foment and promote the Jacobin malady, that they called upon you, a strenuous and steady royalist, an enlightened and exemplary clergyman, a man of birth and respectable connexions in the country, a man well-informed and conversant in state affairs, and in the general politics of the several courts of Europe, and intimately and personally habituated in some of those courts. I regretted indeed that the ministry had declined to make any sort of use of the reiterated informations you had given them of the designs of their enemies, and had taken no notice of the noble and disinterested offers which, through me, were made, for employing you to save Italy and Spain to the British alliance. But this being past, and Spain and Italy lost, I was

in hopes that they were resolved to put themselves in the right at home, by calling upon you; that they would leave, on their part, no cause or pretext for Jacobinism, except in the seditious disposition of individuals; but I now see that, instead of profiting by your advice and services, they will not so much as take the least notice of your written representations, or permit you to have access to them, on the part of those whom it was your business to reconcile to Government, as well as to conciliate Government towards them. Having rejected your services, as a friend of Government, and in some sort in its employment, they will not even permit to you the natural expression of those sentiments, which every man of sense and honesty must feel, and which every plain and sincere man must speak, upon this vile plan of abusing military discipline, and perverting it into an instrument of religious persecution. You remember with what indignation I heard of the scourging of the soldier at Carrick for adhering to his religious opinions. It was at the time when Lord Fitzwilliam went to take possession of a short-lived Government in Ireland — *breves et infaustos populi Hiberni*.

He could not live long in power, because he was a true patriot, a true friend of both countries, a steady resister of Jacobinism in every part of the world. On this occasion he was not of my opinion. He thought, indeed, that the sufferer ought to be relieved and discharged, and I think he was so; but, as to punishment to be inflicted on the offenders, he thought more lenient measures, comprehended in a general plan to prevent such evils in future, would be the better course. My judgement, such as it was, had been that punishment ought to attach, so far as the laws permitted, upon every evil action of subordinate power, as it arose. That such acts ought at least to be marked with the displeasure of Government, because general remedies are uncertain in their operation when obtained; but that it is a matter of general uncertainty whether they can be obtained at all. For

a time, *his* appeared to be the better opinion. Even after he was cruelly torn from the embraces of the people of Ireland, when the militia and other troops were encamped (if I recollect right) at Loughlinstown, you yourself, with the knowledge and acquiescence of Government, publicly performed your function to the Catholics then in service. I believe, too, that all the Irish, who had composed the foreign corps taken into British pay, had their regular chaplains. But we see that things are returning fast to their old corrupted channels. There they will continue to flow.

If any material evil had been stated to have arisen from this liberty, that is, if sedition, mutiny, disobedience of any kind to command, had been taught in their chapels, there might have been a reason for, not only forcing the soldiers into churches where better doctrines were taught, but for punishing the teachers of disobedience and sedition. But I have never heard of any such complaint. It is a part, therefore, of the systematic ill-treatment of Catholics. This system never will be abandoned, as long as it brings advantage to those who adopt it. If the country enjoys a momentary quiet, it is pleaded as an argument in favour of the good effect of wholesome rigours. If, on the contrary, the country grows more discontented, and if riots and disorders multiply, new arguments are furnished for giving a vigorous support to the authority of the directory, on account of the rebellious disposition of the people. So long, therefore, as disorders in the country become pretexts for adding to the power and emolument of a *junto*, means will be found to keep one part of it, or other, in a perpetual state of confusion and disorder. This is the old traditionary policy of that sort of men. The discontents which, under them, break out amongst the people, become the tenure by which they hold their situation.

I do not deny that, in these contests, the people, however oppressed, are frequently much to blame; whether provoked to their excesses or not, undoubtedly the law ought to look to nothing but the offence, and

punish it. The redress of grievances is not less necessary than the punishment of disorders, but it is of another resort. In punishing, however, the law ought to be the only rule. If it is not of sufficient force, a force consistent with its general principles ought to be added to it. The first duty of a state is to provide for its own conservation. Until that point is secured, it can preserve and protect nothing else. But, if possible, it has greater interest in acting according to strict law than even the subject himself. For, if the people see that the law is violated to crush them, they will certainly despise the law. They, or their party, will be easily led to violate it, whenever they can, by all the means in their power. Except in cases of direct war, whenever Government abandons law, it proclaims anarchy. I am well aware (if I cared one farthing, for the few days I have to live, whether the vain breath of men blow hot or cold about me,) that they who censure any oppressive proceeding of Government are exciting the people to sedition and revolt. If there be any oppression, it is very true; or if there be nothing more than the lapses, which will happen to human infirmity at all times, and in the exercise of all power, such complaints would be wicked indeed. These lapses are exceptions implied; an allowance for which is a part of the understood covenant, by which power is delegated by fallible men to other men that are not infallible; but, whenever a hostile spirit on the part of Government is shown, the question assumes another form. This is no casual error, no lapse, no sudden surprise; nor is it a question of civil or political liberty. What contemptible stuff it is to say, that a man who is lashed to church against his conscience, would not discover that the whip is painful, or that he had a conscience to be violated, unless I told him so! Would not a penitent offender, confessing his offence, and expiating it by his blood, when denied the consolation of religion at his last moments, feel it as no injury to himself; or that the rest of the world would feel so horrible and impious an oppression

with no indignation, unless I happened to say it ought to be reckoned amongst the most barbarous acts of our barbarous time? Would the people consider the being taken out of their beds and transported from their family and friends, to be an equitable, and legal, and charitable proceeding, unless I should say that it was a violation of justice and a dissolution, *pro tanto*, of the very compact of human society? If a House of Parliament, whose essence it is to be the guardian of the laws, and a sympathetic protector of the rights of the people, and eminently so of the most defenceless, should not only countenance, but applaud this very violation of all law, and refuse even to examine into the grounds of the necessity, upon the allegation of which the law was so violated, would this be taken for a tender solicitude for the welfare of the poor, and a true proof of the representative capacity of the House of Commons, unless I should happen to say (what I do say) that the House had not done its duty, either in preserving the sacred rules of law, or in justifying the woeful and humiliating privilege of necessity? They may indemnify and reward others. They might contrive, if I was within their grasp, to punish me, or, if they thought it worth their while, to stigmatize me by their censures; but who will indemnify them for the disgrace of such an act? who will save them from the censures of posterity? What act of oblivion will cover them from the wakeful memory, from the notices and issues of the grand remembrancer—the God within? Would it pass with the people, who suffer from the abuse of lawful power, when at the same time they suffer from the use of lawless violence of factions amongst themselves, that Government had done its duty, and acted leniently in not animadverting on one of those acts of violence, if I did not tell them that the lenity with which Government passes by the crimes and oppressions of a favourite faction, was itself an act of the most atrocious cruelty? If a Parliament should hear a declamation, attributing the sufferings of those who

are destroyed by these riotous proceedings to their misconduct, and then to make them self-felonious, and should in effect refuse an inquiry into the fact, is no inference to be drawn from thence, unless I tell men in high places that these proceedings, taken together, form, not only an encouragement to the abuse of power, but to riot, sedition, and a rebellious spirit, which, sooner or later, will turn upon those that encourage it?

I say little of the business of the potato field, because I am not acquainted with the particulars. If any persons were found in arms against the king, whether in a field of potatoes, or of flax, or of turnips, they ought to be attacked by a military power, and brought to condign punishment by course of *law*. If the county in which the rebellion was raised was not in a temper fit for the execution of justice, a law ought to be made, such as was made with regard to Scotland, in the suppression of the rebellion of forty-five, to try the delinquents. There would be no difficulty in convicting men who were found '*flagrante delicto*'. But I hear nothing of all this. No law, no trial, no punishment commensurate to rebellion, nor of a known proportion to any lesser delinquency, nor any discrimination of the more or the less guilty. Shall you and I find fault with the proceedings of France, and be totally indifferent to the proceedings of directories at home? You and I hate Jacobinism as we hate the gates of hell. Why? Because it is a system of oppression. What can make us in love with oppression because the syllables '*Jacobin*' are not put before the '*ism*', when the very same things are done under the '*ism*' preceded by any other name in the directory of Ireland?

I have told you, at a great length for a letter,—very shortly for the subject and for my feelings on it, my sentiments of the scene in which you have been called to act. On being consulted, you advised the sufferers to quiet and submission; and, giving Government full credit for an attention to its duties, you held

out, as an inducement to that submission, some sort of hope of redress. You tried what your reasons and your credit would do to effect it. In consequence of this piece of service to Government, you have been excluded from all communication with the Castle ; and perhaps you may thank yourself that you are not in Newgate. You have done a little more than, in your circumstances, I should have done. You are, indeed, very excusable from your motives ; but it is very dangerous to hold out to an irritated people any hopes that we are not pretty sure of being able to realize. The doctrine of passive obedience, as a doctrine, it is unquestionably right to teach, but to go beyond that, is a sort of deceit ; and the people who are provoked by their oppressors, do not readily forgive their friends, if, whilst the first persecute, the other appear to deceive them. These friends lose all power of being serviceable to that government in whose favour they have taken an ill-considered step ; therefore, my opinion is, that, until the Castle shall show a greater disposition to listen to its true friends than hitherto it has done, it would not be right in you any further to obtrude your services. In the meantime, upon any new application from the Catholics, you ought to let them know, simply and candidly, how you stand.

The Duke of Portland sent you to Ireland, from a situation in this country of advantage and comfort to yourself, and no small utility to others. You explained to him, in the clearest manner, the conduct you were resolved to hold. I do not know that your writing to him will be of the smallest advantage. I rather think not : yet I am far from sure that you do not owe to him and yourself, to represent to his Grace the matters which in substance you have stated to me.

If anything else should occur to me, I shall, as you ask it, communicate my thoughts to you. In the meantime, I shall be happy to hear from you as often as you find it convenient. You never can neglect the great object of which you are so justly fond ; and let

me beg of you not to let slip out of your mind the idea of the auxiliary studies and acquirements which I recommended to you, to add to the merely professional pursuits of your young clergy ; and, above all, I hope that you will use the whole of your influence among the Catholics, to persuade them to a greater indifference about the political objects which at present they have in view. It is not but that I am aware of their importance, or that I wish them to be abandoned ; but that they would follow opportunities, and not attempt to force anything. I doubt whether the privileges they now seek, or have lately sought, are compassable. The struggle would, I am afraid, only lead to those very disorders which are made pretexts for further oppression of the oppressed. I wish the leading people amongst them would give the most systematic attention, to prevent frequent communication with their adversaries. There are a part of them proud, insulting, capricious, and tyrannical. These, of course, will keep at a distance. There are others of a seditious temper, who would make them at first the instruments, and in the end the victims, of their factious temper and purposes. Those that steer a middle course are truly respectable, but they are very few. Your friends ought to avoid all imitation of the vices of their proud lords. To many of these they are themselves sufficiently disposed. I should therefore recommend to the middle ranks of that description, in which I include not only all merchants, but all farmers and tradesmen, that they would change as much as possible those expensive modes of living, and that dissipation, to which our countrymen in general are so much addicted. It does not at all become men in a state of persecution. They ought to conform themselves to the circumstances of a people, whom Government is resolved not to consider as upon a par with their fellow-subjects. Favour, they will have none. They must aim at other resources ; and to make themselves independent in *fact*, before they aim at a *nominal* independence. Depend upon it,

that, with half the privileges of the others, joined to a different system of manners, they would grow to a degree of importance, to which, without it, no privileges could raise them, much less any intrigues or factious practices. I know very well that such a discipline, among so numerous a people, is not easily introduced, but I am sure it is not impossible. If I had youth and strength, I would go myself over to Ireland to work on that plan ; so certain I am that the well-being of all descriptions in the kingdom, as well as of themselves, depends upon a reformation amongst the Catholics. The work will be new, and slow in its operation, but it is certain in its effect. There is nothing which will not yield to perseverance and method. Adieu ! my dear sir. You have full liberty to show this letter to all those (and they are but very few) who may be disposed to think well of my opinions. I did not care, so far as regards myself, whether it were read on the 'Change ; but with regard to you, more reserve may be proper ; but of that, you will be the best judge.

TO DR. LAURENCE

*Bath, February 10, 1797.*

MY DEAR LAURENCE,

I have been very weak for some days past, and so giddy that I am hardly able to walk across the room. At the first coming on of this bad symptom I was not able to do so much—so that I am not without hopes that it may go off, though, take me on the whole, I am without all comparison worse than when I came hither, but yet the violent flatul's have not been quite so troublesome to me since the complaint in my head is come on. They have taken the town, and are now attacking the citadel—But enough of this. The affair of Mrs. Hastings has something in it that might move a third Cato to a horse-laugh, though the means, I am afraid, by which she and her paramour have made that and all the sums which they have got

by their own dishonesty, or lost by the dishonesty of others or the confusion of the times, [might cause] the laughing Democritus to weep as much as his opponent: but let whoever laugh or weep, nothing plaintive will make Mr. Pitt or Mr. Dundas blush for having rewarded the criminal whom they prosecuted, and sent me and nineteen Members of Parliament to prosecute, for every mode of speculation and oppression, with a greater sum of money than ever yet was paid to any one British subject, except the Duke of Marlbro', for the most acknowledged public services, and not to him if you take Blenheim, which was an expense and not a charge, out of the account. All this and ten times more will not hinder them from adding the Peerage, to make up the insufficiency of his pecuniary rewards. My illness, which came the more heavily and suddenly upon me by this flagitious act, whilst I was preparing a representation upon it, has hindered me, as you know, from doing justice to that act, to Mr. Hastings, to myself, to the House of Lords, to the House of Commons, and to the unhappy people of India, on that subject. It has made me leave the letters that I was writing to my Lord Chancellor and Mr. Dundas, as well as my petition to the House of Commons, unfinished. But you remember, likewise, that when I came hither at the beginning of last summer, I repeated to you that dying request which I now reiterate, That if at any time, without the danger of ruin to yourself, or over-distracting you from your professional and parliamentary duties, you can place in a short point of view, and support by the documents in print and writing which exist with me, or with Mr. Troward, or yourself, the general merits of this transaction, you will erect a cenotaph most grateful to my shade, and will clear my memory from that load, which the East India Company, King, Lords, and Commons, and in a manner the whole British Nation, (God forgive them,) have been pleased to lay as a monument upon my ashes. I am as conscious as any person can be of

the little value of the good or evil opinion of mankind to the part of me that shall remain, but I believe it is of some moment not to leave the fame of an evil example, of the expenditure of fourteen years labour, and of not less (taking the expense of the suit, and the costs paid to Mr. Hastings, and the parliamentary charges) than near £300,000. This is a terrible example, and it is not acquittance at all to a public man, who, with all the means of undeceiving himself if he was wrong, has thus with such incredible pains both of himself and others, persevered in the persecution of innocence and merit. It is, I say, no excuse at all to urge in his apology, that he has had enthusiastic good intentions. In reality, you know that I am no enthusiast, but [according] to the powers that God has given me, a sober and reflecting man. I have not even the other very bad excuse, of acting from personal resentment, or from the sense of private injury—never having received any; nor can I plead ignorance, no man ever having taken more pains to be informed. Therefore *I say, Remember.*

Parliament is shortly to resume the broken thread of its business—if what it is doing deserves that name. I feel the same anxiety for your success as if what has been the best part of me was in your place, and engaged as he would have been in the same work, and I presume to take the same liberty with you that I would have done with him. The plan you have formed, like all the plans of such comprehensive minds as yours, is vast, but it will require all the skill of a mind as judicious and selecting as yours, to bring it within the compass of the apprehensions and dispositions of those upon whom it is to operate. There would be difficulty in giving to it its just extent in the very opening, if you could count even upon one person able and willing to support you; but as you will be attacked by one side of the House with all its force, reluctantly heard and totally abandoned by the other, if you are permitted any reply at all, a thing which under similar circumstances has been refused to me, it

will not be heard by the exhausted attention of that House, which is hardly to be kept alive, except to what concerns the factious interests of the two discordant chiefs, who with different personal views, but on the same political principles, divide and distract the nation. But all this I must leave to your judgement, which, with less parliamentary experience, has infinitely more natural power than mine ever had, when it was at the best. This, only, I shall beg leave to suggest, that if it should be impossible (as perhaps it may be) to bring your opening speech within any narrow compass, such as two hours, or thereabouts, that you will make your reply as sharp, and pointed at the personal attacks that I am sure will be made upon you, as you can; and that you will content yourself with reasserting the substance of the facts, declaring your readiness to enter into them if ever you are furnished with the means. I have no doubt that in the course of the debate, or in this session, you will find opportunities to bring forth what your discretion may reserve on the present occasion for a future one, when you may be at more liberty. Though I am sensible enough of the difficulty of finding a place in debate for any of those who are not arranged in the line of battle, abreast or ahead, in support of the one or the other of the great admirals. My dear friend, you will have the goodness to excuse the interposition of an exhausted and sickly judgement like mine, at its best, infirm, with a mind like yours, the most robust that ever was made, and in the vigour of its faculties; but allowance is made for the anxious solicitude of those, whom sex, age, or debility exclude from a share in those combats in which they take a deep concern.

Yours ever,

EDMUND BURKE.

*February 12.*

PS. My health continues as it was when I began this letter.—I have read Erskine's pamphlet, which

is better done than I expected to find it. But it is little more than a digest of the old matter, and a proposal to remove all our evils by a universal popular representation at home, by giving to France at once all that we have thought proper to offer, on supposition of concession, and all that she has chosen to demand without any regard to our concession, together with a cordial connexion with her and a total alienation from other powers, as a pledge of future peace. This, together with bringing Mr. Fox into power, forms the whole of the pamphlet. This would certainly make short work of the treaty.—This pamphlet does not make your motion the less necessary, and without a reference to it you may keep it in your eye.—Mrs. Burke, thank God, is better of her cold: She salutes you.

TO DR. LAURENCE

*Bath, May 12, 1797.*

MY DEAR LAURENCE,

The times are so deplorable, that I do not know how to write about them. Indeed I can hardly bear to think of them. In the selection of these mischiefs, those, which have the most recently oppressed, and overpowered, rather than exercised the shattered remains of my understanding, are those of the Navy, and those of Ireland. As to the first, I shall say nothing, except this, that you must remember from the moment the true genius of this French Revolution began to dawn upon my mind, I comprehended what it would be in its meridian; and that I have often said, that I should dread more from one or two maritime provinces in France, in which the spirit and principles of that revolution were established, than from the old French Monarchy possessed of all that its ambition ever aspired to obtain; that we should begin to be infected in the first nidus and hot-bed of their infection, the subordinate parts of our military force, and that I should not be surprised at seeing a French convoyed by a British Navy to an attack

upon this kingdom. I think you must remember the thing, and the phrase. I trust in God that these mutineers may not as yet have imbrued their hands deeply in blood. If they have, we must expect the worst that can happen. Alas! for the mischiefs that are done by the newspapers, and by the imbecility of the Ministers, who neither refuse or modify any concession, nor execute with promptitude the resolutions they take through fear; but are hesitating and backward, even in their measures of retreat and flight: in truth they know nothing of the manœuvre either in advance or retreat.

The other affair, hardly less perplexing, nor much less instantly urging, is that of Ireland.

Mr. Baldwin was here, and he spoke something, though indistinctly and confusedly, of a strong desire that he supposed the ——<sup>1</sup> to have for a reconciliation with ——<sup>2</sup>. Whether this is mere loose talk, such as I have uniformly heard from the day of the fatal rupture, is more than I know. My answer was, that while the cause of this calamitous rupture was yet in its operation, I had done everything which a man like me could do, to prevent it, and its effects, but that now the question was not what should reconcile the ——<sup>1</sup> to ——<sup>2</sup>, but what would reconcile Ireland to England. This was very near the whole of our conversation. You know he does not see very far, nor combine very much. I have had a hint from another quarter, not indeed very direct, to know whether it was my opinion that a concession to the Irish Catholics, would quiet that country. To this I have given no answer, because at this moment I am utterly incapable of giving any, the least distinct. Three months ago, perhaps even two months ago, I can say with confidence, notwithstanding the hand from which it would be offered, it would have prevented the discontents from running into one mass; even if the compliance had been decently evaded, and future hopes held out, I think these mischiefs would not

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Portland.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Fitzwilliam.

have happened; but instead of this, every measure has been used that could possibly tend to irritation. The rejection of the Memorial was abrupt, final, and without any temperament whatsoever. The speeches in the House of Lords on Ireland were in the same strain; and in the House of Commons, the Ministers put forward a wretched brawler, one Duigenan of your profession, to attack Mr. Fox, though they knew, that as a British Member of Parliament, he was by them invulnerable; but their great object was, to get him to rail at the whole body of Catholics and Dissenters in Ireland in the most foul and unmeasured language. This brought on, as they might well have expected from Mr. Grattan, one of the most animated philippics which he ever yet delivered, against their Government and Parliament.

It was a speech the best calculated that could be conceived further to inflame the irritation which the Castle-brawler's long harangue must necessarily have produced. As to Mr. Fox, he had all the honour of the day, because the invective against him was stupid, and from a man of no authority or weight whatsoever; and the panegyric which was opposed to it, was full of eloquence, and from a great name. The Attorney-General in wishing the motion withdrawn, as I understand, did by no means discountenance the principle upon which it was made, nor disown the attack, which was made, in a manner, upon the whole people of Ireland. The Solicitor-General went the full length of supporting it. Instead of endeavouring to widen the narrow bottom upon which they stand, they make it their policy to render it every day more narrow. In the Parliament of Great Britain, Lord Grenville's speech turned the loyalty of the Catholics against themselves. He argued from that zeal and loyalty they manifested, their want of a sense of any grievance. This speech, though probably well intended, was the most indiscreet and mischievous of the whole. People do not like to be put into practical dilemmas. If the people are turbulent and riotous, nothing is to

be done for them on account of their evil dispositions. If they are obedient and loyal, nothing is to be done for them, because their being quiet and contented is a proof that they feel no grievance. I know that this declaration has had its natural effect, and that in several places the Catholics think themselves called upon to deny the inference made by Ministers from their good conduct. It seems to them a great insult to convert their resolution to support the king's Government into an approbation of the conduct of those who make it the foundation of their credit and authority that they are the enemies of their description.

I send you two extracts of letters, for Lord Fitzwilliam's and your information, from intelligent and well-informed people in Cork; and one of them from a gentleman of much consideration and influence in that place. These will let you see the effect of that conduct which tends to unite all descriptions of persons in the South, in the same spirit of discontent, and in the same bonds of sedition with those of the North. As far as I can find, no part of the army in Ireland is yet tainted with the general spirit; but under a general discontent it is impossible it should long continue sound; and even if it did, it is as impossible that such a country can be ruled by a military government, even if there were no enemy abroad to take advantage of that miserable state of things.

Now suffer me to throw down to you my thoughts of what might be expected under the existing circumstances, from the mere grant of an Act of Parliament for a total emancipation. This measure I hold to be a fundamental part in any plan for quieting that country and reconciling it to this; but you are well aware, that this measure, like every other measure of the kind, must depend on the manner in which it is done, the persons who do it, and the skill and judgment with which the whole is conducted. And first, my clear opinion is, that as long as the present junta continue to govern Ireland, such a measure into which they must manifestly appear to be reluctantly driven,

never can produce the effects proposed by it, because it is impossible to persuade the people that as long as they govern, they will not have both the power and inclination totally to frustrate the effect of this new arrangement, as they have done that of all the former.

Indeed it will appear astonishing that these men should be kept in the sole monopoly of all power, upon the sole merit of their resistance to the Catholic claims, as inconsistent with the connexion of the two kingdoms; and yet at the same time to see those claims admitted, and the pretended principle of the connexion of the two countries abandoned, to preserve to the same persons the same monopoly. By this it would appear that the subject is either to be relieved or not; and the union of the two kingdoms abandoned, or maintained, just as it may answer the purposes of a faction of three or four individuals. But if that junto was thrown out to-morrow along with their measure, Government has proceeded in such a manner, and committed so many in violent declarations on this subject, that a complete emancipation would no longer pass with its former facility, and a strong ferment would be excited in the Church party, who though but few in numbers, have in their hands most of the ultimate and superior property of the kingdom. These difficulties appear to me to be great. Certain it is, that if they were removed, the leaders of the opposition must be taken into their places, and become the object of confidence to an English Government. They are to a man pledged for some alteration in the constitution of Parliament. If they made no such alteration, they would lose the weight which they have, and which is necessary to quiet the country. If on the other hand they were to attempt a change upon any of the plans of moderation which I hear they have adopted, they would be as far from satisfying the demands of the extravagant people, whom they mean to comply with, as they would be in preserving the actual constitution which was fabricated

in 1614. The second infallible consequence would be, that if a revolution of this kind (for it would be a revolution) were accomplished in Ireland, though the grounds are a little different yet the principle is so much the same, that it would be impossible long to resist an alteration of the same kind on this side of the water; and I never have doubted since I came to the years of discretion, nor ever can doubt, that such changes in this kingdom would be preliminary steps to our utter ruin; but if I considered them as such at all times, what must they appear to me at a moment like the present? I see no way of settling these kingdoms but by a great change in the superior Government *here*. If the present Administration is removed, it is manifest to me, that the Duke of Bedford, and Lord Guilford, and the Duke of Northumberland, and Lord Lansdowne, all, or most of them, under the direction of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox, will be the sole option; that if they took in the Duke of Portland, they must take him in, at best, in the state of utter insignificance in which unfortunately he now stands. That they would gladly take in my Lord Fitzwilliam I have no question; but, I am sure, he would have no support, and never would be suffered to play any principal part, as long as he holds the maxims, and is animated by the sentiments for which, as a statesman, we value him. He certainly would be best in Ireland, but I am very far from being sure that his connexions there would look up to him with the same simple and undivided affection which they formerly did; and I am equally uncertain whether he would leave behind him a ministry, which in the mass would be better disposed to his support, than those who had formerly betrayed him. Besides, I cannot look without horror, upon his being conjoined (and possibly found in a new reign in such a conjunction) with a Ministry who have spared no pains to prove their indifference at least, to the local honour and interest of their country, or to the general liberty of Europe. And indeed, who have wished to leave

no doubt upon any mind, that it is their ambition to act in this country as a subordinate department to the Directory of the French Republic. I see no ray of hope but in some sort of coalition between the heads of the factions who now distract us, formed upon a sense of the public danger. But unfortunately their animosity towards each other grows with the danger. I confess that if no such coalition is made, and yet that a change should take place, I see in the present Ministry and its partisans an opposition far more formidable than that which we have at present; and that after a while at least, their principles and their modes of proceeding will not be found very different from those of the present Opposition. I must add, since I am opening my mind so much at large, that when I look at the state of the *civil* list in Great Britain, which I have reason to know and feel to be full two years in debt to most of the departments, I see no means of carrying on government upon anything like a broad bottom, even officially; to say nothing of the necessary accommodation to those expectants who will look to come forward with advantage, or to retire without marks of disgrace; and both parties have emulously concurred in cutting off all those extraneous means of accommodation, which might supply the deficiency of the civil list resources. In Ireland things are yet worse. They have seized upon all the means of government, in order to accommodate one family, and its dependencies; and they have so squandered away every resource, under the pretence of providing a home defence, that not only is Ireland unable to form a system of comprehension, but England will soon find itself unable to supply that kingdom with the means of its ordinary existence. To whatever point of the compass I turn my eyes, I see nothing but difficulty and disaster. You will naturally say, Why therefore do you reason in a state of despair? I do it, that Lord Fitzwilliam and yourself may see my melancholy reveries in this deplorable state of things. The very consideration of the difficulties

which strike me, may suggest to better heads than mine, the means of overcoming them.

I do not know whether you have seen Hussey's Pastoral Letter. It is written with eloquence and energy, and with perhaps too little management towards the unfortunate system which rules in Ireland at present; but it is the product of a manly mind. strongly impressed with the trust committed to his hands for supporting that religion, in the administration of which he has a very responsible place, and which he considers as in the commencement of a new persecution. It is therefore no wonder that he recommends an adherence to it under all circumstances, which many people animated by a contrary party zeal may not approve: but men must act according to their situation, and for one I am of opinion that it were better to have a strong party zeal, provided it is bottomed in our common principles, than anything resembling infidelity, which last we know, by woful experience, is as capable of religious persecution as any sectarian spirit can possibly be.

I received your letter of yesterday. Nothing can equal the precipitation of Ministers, in acceding to the demands of the first mutiny. Nothing but want of foresight can be alleged in favour of the formalizing delay to effectuate the purposes of the grant which had been extorted from their fears. But this will ever be the case of those who act from no principle but fear. The moment that is over, they fall into a supine security. I agree with you, that no folly ever equalled their attempt to beg off discussion upon this subject. They ought to have known that it would have no other effect than what it had, which was to provoke and inflame the discussion they so childishly sought to avoid; but the whole is the result of that meanness of spirit which has brought on all our misfortunes, and rendered all our resources fruitless.

Delicacy alone has been the sole cause of my silence to Mr. Windham, with relation to the affairs of Ireland; otherwise he is entitled to, and he possesses

my most unreserved confidence. I have therefore no sort of difficulty in wishing him to know my thoughts upon that subject. They will not be very encouraging to him, because I am greatly afraid that the preposterous method [of] beginning with force and ending with concession, may defeat the effect of both. If things had been in their natural course, I should certainly have agreed with him. No concession on the part of Government ought ever to be made without such a demonstration of force, as might ensure it against contempt. It will always be a matter of great moment in whose hands the force to be applied in domestic disturbances is placed. Never, no, never shall I be persuaded that any force can appear otherwise than as odious, and more odious than dreaded, when it is known to be under the direction of Lord Carhampton. I will not enter into all the particulars, but among the many mischievous measures lately adopted, his nomination to the office of commander-in-chief led to by far the worst consequences.

When I am opening my mind to you, I must add, that as long as a shallow, hot-headed puppy, proud and presumptuous, and ill behaved, like Mr. Cooke, has the chief or any credit at the Castle, or with Ministry here, I can expect no sort of good from anything that can be done in Parliament. When we talk of giving way to Mr. Grattan and the Ponsonbys, I suppose it is meant that they should be taken into the Irish Ministry; else to give them a triumph, and at the same time to leave them in a state of discontent and dissatisfaction, if we consider the interest of Government as Government, is to act against the most obvious dictates of common sense. Adieu. I may truly say with Addison's Cato, 'I am weary of conjecture.' I will not add with him, that 'this must end them'. But they must soon be ended by the Master of the drama, to whose will, pray with me, that we may be all, in all things, submissive.—Don't forget to send me the Report of the House of Commons, and that of the House of Lords, if you can get it; though

I do not know why I am anxious about it, because as a nation our fate seems decided, and we perish with all the material means of strength that ever nation has possessed, by a poverty and imbecility of mind which has no example I am sure, and could have no excuse even in the weakest. Adieu, adieu.

Yours ever,

E. B.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE TO ARTHUR YOUNG, ESQ.

*Bath, May 23, 1797.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I am on the point of leaving Bath, having no further hope of benefit from these waters; and as soon as I get home, (if I should live to get home,) if I should find the papers transmitted me by your board, I shall send them faithfully to you, though, to say the truth, I do not think them of very great importance. My constant opinion was, and is, that all matters relative to labour ought to be left to the conventions of the parties; that the great danger is, in governments intermeddling too much. What I should have taken the liberty of addressing to you, had I had the strength to go through it, would be to illustrate or enforce that principle. I am extremely sorry that any one in the House of Commons should be found so ignorant and unadvised, as to wish to revive the senseless, barbarous, and, in fact, wicked regulations made against the free-trade in matter of provision, which the good sense of late Parliaments had removed. I am the more concerned at the measure, as I was myself the person who moved the repeal of the absurd code of statutes against the most useful of all trades, under the invidious names of forestalling and regrating. But, however, I console myself on this point by considering that it is not the only breach by which barbarism is entering upon us. It is, indeed, but a poor consolation, and one taken merely from the balance of

misfortunes. You have titles enough of your own, to pass your name to posterity, and I am pleased that you have yet spirit enough to hope that there will be such a thing as a civilized posterity to attend to things of this kind. I have the honour to be, with very high respect and esteem,

Dear sir, your most obedient  
and very humble servant,  
EDM. BURKE.

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